GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Sarajevo Divided Over Peace Plan

John Pomfret in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO'S reaction to the signing of Bosnia's peace deal in Paris was summed up last week by two different messages to President Clinton.

One, a cartoon on the front page of Oslobodenje, the main daily for the Muslim-side of the Bosnian capital, showed Clinton as a roly-poly Santa Claus doling out early Christmas presents to Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The other message was a banner, strung across a street in one of the five Serb suburbs that under the peace plan is to revert to Bosnian government control. "America," it said, "thank you for peace but where should we go now?"

The different responses underscored one of the most stunning reversals in Bosnia since war erupted here in April 1992. For 43 months, the Muslims of Sarajevo have been viewed as the great losers of this battle, suffering a brutal siege of sniper fire and mortar shelling.

The Serbs, their besiegers, have played the role of the victor, studying the city from field glasses, ambling over to a howitzer, training their sights on an apartment building and blasting away. Now, suddenly, with the signing of a peace plan for Bosnia, the roles are reversed. Formerly beleaguered Sarajevo is flooded with bananas, diesel fuel, Swiss chocolate, squid and a modicum of hope. Three radio stations vie for listeners with the latest in gangsta rap and Motown classics.

On the Serb side, triumph has turned quickly to defeat. Suburbs like Ilidza and Vogosca, which once got rich on black market deals by selling fuel and fish to Sarajevo, now have their hand out. Old ladies hawk gasoline from soda bottles in the slush. Serb soldiers at checkpoints beg foreign reporters to fill up rusty jerry cans at the nearest Muslim pump.

"We are at your mercy," said Dusan Panic, a 25-year-old soldier who pleaded with one reporter to buy his 2-year-old son some chocolates on the Muslim side. When told that just a few months ago, the best fudge came from stores on his side, he smiled wistfully. "Things change," he said.

Under the peace deal, most of Sarajevo, which has been divided since the war began, will revert in three months to control of the Muslim-dominated government. The estimated 70,000 Serbs who live in Serb-controlled territory are reportedly fearful at the prospect of living under Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic. In a non-binding referendum on the peace deal held last week, more than 90 percent of them voted against it.

Serb officials have asked representatives of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees for assistance in digging up their cemeteries so that "they can carry their dead with them when they go," said one U.N. official.

While U.N. officials acknowledge that some of the opposition in Serb-held areas around Sarajevo to the deal is genuine, an intense propaganda campaign by the Bosnian Serb leadership has magnified it. Every night Bosnian Serb serves up a heavy dose of shrill reporting designed to startle any Serb who might have plans to stay.

Aristide's 'Twin' Heads for Victory

Douglas Farah in Port-au-Prince

RENE PREVAL, the man widely predicted to sweep to victory in Sunday's elections, has such a close relationship with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide that supporters call them "the twins" despite their sharp differences in temperament and upbringing.

According to recent polls, Préval, 51, who was handpicked and endorsed by Aristide, could win the support of up to 72 percent of voters. None of the other 13 candidates has drawn more than 15 percent. If no one wins more than 50 percent of the vote, a second round with the top two candidates will be held in January.

While Aristide, a former Roman Catholic priest, grew up in poverty, Préval is the son of an upper-middle-class rural family and he studied agronomy in a prestigious Belgian university. He mingled with the Haitian exile community in Europe while Aristide was organizing popular organizations to overthrow the Duvalier dictatorship.

Préval's father was a minister of agriculture before François Duvalier came to power in 1957. The Préval family fled in 1963, moving to Europe. His experience abroad, according to his friends, gave him a much more sophisticated understanding of how the world works than Aristide had.

"For example, Aristide understands nothing about economics," said one person who works with both Préval and Aristide. "Préval does. Clearly he is more conscious of the importance of the international community and a good bit more aware of trying to seek some sort of middle ground with the elite. He knows them and they know him."

Préval spent several years in New York, then returned to Haiti around 1982 and opened a bakery. He and Aristide began working together more than a decade ago when a mutual friend, Antoine Izmery, introduced them. Izmery, a wealthy merchant and principal financier of Aristide's 1990 presidential campaign, was assassinated by military thugs in 1993.

Aristide rose to prominence as a mesmerizing speaker while Préval worked with grass-roots organizations. He remains awkward and nervous in public appearances. Both survived numerous assassination attempts. The two were together at the St. John Bosco Church, Aristide's parish, in September 1988 when heavily armed army thugs burst into a Mass and killed 13 people. The two escaped through a side door.

Préval, known affectionately as Ti Rene or Little Rene because of his diminutive stature, was crucial in



Préval voting in Sunday's polls

pushing Aristide to run for president in 1990. Aristide named Préval his prime minister and minister of defense. They were toppled by a military coup in September 1991, which only was reversed 14 months ago when a U.S.-led force brought back Aristide and Préval.

Now, if Préval wins, the challenge will be for the two to oversee the first peaceful transfer of power in the nation's turbulent 191 years as an independent nation. Préval, after spending years being overshadowed by Aristide in the Lavalas movement, seems more comfortable in the wings and has promised to govern "hand in hand" with Aristide — who is prohibited constitutionally from seeking consecutive terms.

Leslie Voltaire, Aristide's chief of staff and a close friend of Préval, described Préval as "very shy, loyal and practical. He delegates a lot of authority, sometimes too much. He is very pragmatic."

Pragmatic, however, is not a word many would have used to describe Préval in the early days of the Aristide government. He was more distrusted by many at the U.S. Embassy and in the Haitian business class than was Aristide. Aristide was widely viewed as a radical, embracing liberation theology and its elements of Marxism, while decrying capitalism as a "mortal sin." And Préval was viewed as even further to the left.

In August 1991, the fractious Parliament demanded that Préval, as prime minister, appear for questioning and possible censure. Aristide objected strongly. Massive demonstrations around the Parliament building by supporters of Aristide and Préval forced the legislators to adjourn before taking up the censure motion. The demonstrators set tires ablaze, set one building on fire, wrecked a political party headquarters and attacked two legislators.

While burning tires, the demonstrators chanted, "Don't lay a finger on Préval. You will get burned," in what many observers viewed as a threat to use the gasoline-soaked tires as "necklaces," putting them around the neck of opponents.

The demonstrations helped set the climate for the bloody military coup that toppled the government.

During the coup, Preval went into hiding and, with the help of Izmery, was taken in the trunk of a French diplomat's car to asylum at the French Embassy. From there, he made his way to Mexico, then joined Aristide in Washington during most of the three years of exile.

While 20,000 U.S. troops occupied the nation last year to restore democratic rule and oust the military, some 6,000 U.N. troops remain, including about 2,200 Americans, to help stabilize the nation.

"If Haiti can establish a process whereby a tremendously popular president leaves office voluntarily, democracy will have taken a huge step here," said a veteran diplomat. "Even if power is going from one twin to another, the fact there is a transfer is very important."

Canadian Professor Stirs Freedom Debate

Charles Trueheart in Toronto

COOLLY testing the outer limits of academic freedom, a part-time journalism professor here has begun talking unrepentantly about his after-hours work as a prostitute and his private views that man-boy sex can be acceptable.

The case was ignited last month, when Gerald Hannon, a magazine writer who teaches a journalism course at Ryerson Polytechnic University, was exposed in a Toronto tabloid as a published exponent of "intergenerational sex," specifically between adult men and adolescent boys.

Hannon's colleagues and students, Ryerson's administration and faculty union, and most of the city's journalism community rallied to the popular professor's defense.

Although he has written sympathetic articles about paedophilia and openly argues that healthy intimate relationships are possible between generations, no evidence has surfaced that Hannon ever discussed the subject in his classes. It has come up, he and students have said, only in the context of journalism law.

Apparently emboldened by his new status as a crusader for academic freedom, Hannon spilled another sensational tale recently. He said he supplemented his teaching and writing income by advertising sexual services in newspaper ads. "My niche is men who find older men attractive," said Hannon, who is 51.

Prostitution is legal here, and once again there was no evidence that Hannon ever conducted or touted his sex business on campus or with students. But under a torrent of bad publicity, Ryerson President Claude Lajeunesse suspended Hannon and barred him from the downtown Toronto campus pending an investigation into whether his "alleged conduct is unbefitting his status as a member of the teaching community of Ryerson."

"They hired me for two reasons: I'm a good writer and I'm a good teacher," Hannon said recently. "Nothing has been changed by the discovery that I'm a prostitute as well. Nothing." He was joined at a news conference by representatives of the Writers Union of Canada and the union representing Ryerson's part-time teachers, as well as by faculty and students.

Hannon continued to insist that relationships between men and boys can be beneficial, citing a recent conversation with a 54-year-old man who was still grateful for having had such an experience when he was 9.

Jonathan Knight, an official of the American Association of University Professors in Washington, said he could think of no recent case involving a faculty member in a U.S. university facing sanctions because of private sexual conduct or ideas. He said such cases typically arise in church-related institutions where professors are expected to be role models in private and public, not just pedagogues.

War of Words at U.N.

John M. Goshko

SECRETARY General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and U.S. Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright last week shattered the United Nations' normal atmosphere of decorous diplomatic discourse when Boutros-Ghali denounced the "vulgarity" of her language. Albright, in turn, replied that his accusation was "unacceptable."

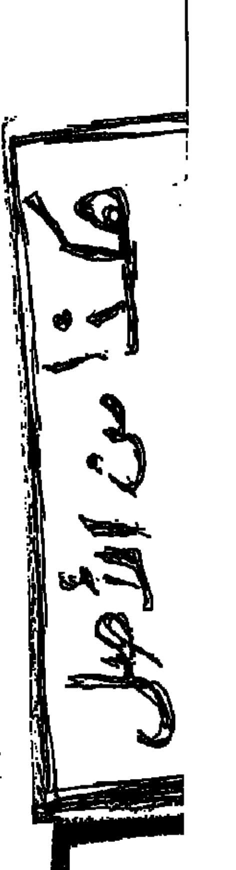
The exchange, sparked by a dispute over whether the United Nations or NATO should oversee a peacekeeping force in the disputed region of Croatia known as Eastern Slavonia, was almost unheard of in a forum where a term like "counterproductive" is considered the outer limits of fighting words. It marked a new flareup of the tensions that frequently have affected U.S. relations with Boutros-Ghali in the four years since the veteran Egyptian diplomat became secretary general.

The argument came as diplomats have been speculating whether Boutros-Ghali, whose term expires at the end of 1996, will seek a second five-year term and whether the United States would support him. The Clinton administration disagrees with many of Boutros-Ghali's policies and priorities, and it has said privately that it hasn't decided whether to back his re-election.

However, Albright issued a statement saying that she "does not want to extend this disagreement with the secretary general any further." Other U.S. diplomats added that this latest tiff did not denote an irreparable breach between Washington and Boutros-Ghali. The question of U.S. backing if he seeks another term remains open, they added.

The sharp exchange took place during a closed meeting of the Security Council. Sources who were present said Boutros-Ghali, speaking in French, referred to criticism of him made by Albright and said he was "shocked by the statement of the American spokesman and shocked by its vulgarity."

Perhaps the final word came from a French diplomat, who said: "Actually we don't think 'vulgarity' was the most precise translation of what he said. We think the term he had in mind was 'tastelessness'."



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The Washington Post Le Monde

Comeback Kid wins duel in the sun

THE YEAR IN THE USA
Martin Walker

IT WAS the year of the graphs. Wall Street stocks rose and rose, apparently defying economic gravity to break record after record. The dollar plunged and then soared against the Japanese yen. The Clinton administration boasted that it had maintained its record of creating 2 million new jobs a year. The stock of the Republican leader, Speaker Newt Gingrich, sank and sank, while the approval ratings of President Clinton and his reputation in international affairs rose on an almost reciprocal trajectory.

The only unchanging trend in the game of political snakes and ladders was that of Senator Robert Dole, who ended the year as he had started it, the dully predictable Republican front runner for the presidential nomination. Aged and unexciting at 72, and as far from the radical conservative pyrotechnics of Speaker Gingrich as he was from the glib, resilient energies of President Clinton, Mr Dole appeared to be the tortoise in a race of hares. Even the blaze of hope and publicity which engulfed retired General Colin Powell in the summer and autumn could not deter the dogged Dole as he continued his stately plod towards his last chance at the White House.

But that brief and tantalising starburst of Colin Powell was entirely characteristic of an American year that was punctuated by such flares. The first was the real explosion of Oklahoma City in April, when more than 180 people inside a federal government office building were killed by a large home-made bomb. The trials have yet to start, but this act of domestic terrorism appears to have been the work of a shadowy new militia movement of people who believe that their government is engaged in an authoritarian conspiracy against traditional American freedoms.

The second nova that flared across the airwaves and the press was the conclusion to the long, long trial of O J Simpson. He was acquitted by a largely black jury of murdering his estranged wife and a restaurant waiter who was visiting her. Despite much play with DNA evidence by an unimpressive prosecution, the defence managed to persuade the jury to cast its verdict for a different trial altogether — whether Simpson had been the victim of a plot to frame him by palpably racist white police.

The third great blaze of the year was a sympathetic explosion, detonated by the O J trial, the million-man march of black males in Washington convened by the Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan. Convinced that Aids and drug abuse are white conspiracies aimed at destroying black America, Farrakhan managed to exploit the racial tensions of the O J trial to rally twice as many black Americans to his march as ever gathered for Dr Martin Luther King. In the event, Farrakhan's speech was a weird mix of ancient Egyptian mysticism and postmodern sociological sense. America's black males should take responsibility for their own communities and their own families.

There were some common threads that connected these great flurries of national attention. Common to Colin Powell and O J Simpson and the million man march was that besetting obsession with race, as if it were the original sin of American democracy since slavery. Each of the three men had taken an entirely characteristic route of ambitious black Americans to prominence and prosperity: Powell through the military, O J through sport and entertainment; and Farrakhan to radical politics by way of religion.

In each case, something went awry. America might finally have been ready to embrace a black president, but Powell was not ready for the attempt. America might have responded to that great groan of black pain from the million man march, but they could not abide the anti-Semitic messenger in his bow tie with his bodyguards in comic opera uniform.

A prominent black American might finally have been given a fair trial on charges of murdering his white wife, but a fair trial was precisely what Simpson did not get. The prosecution was poisoned by the perjured racism of a white detective who denied using the word "nigger", although it was often on his lips. And the defence injected that poison back into the deliberations, not only of the jury, but into a broader national audience whose white members were overwhelmingly convinced of his guilt, while its black members were equally confident of his innocence.

THE common thread linking these events to Olkahoma City was the perehnial American theme of conspiracy, that life was being manipulated by shadowy and sinister forces. Whether by a group of gun-loving white zealots in camouflage suits, by a jury in Los Angeles, by a massed rally of black men in Washington, the evil conspirators had to be resisted. That was the American way, from the patriots of 1776 to the plots of countless Hollywood movies. The elevation of self-interest into virtue, of paranoia into principle, of outsider into hero, is not only an American art form; there would not be much left of American art without it.

That was also the strategy that President Clinton devised to challenge the new Republican ascendancy in Congress. The wicked Gingrichites were plotting to destroy American values, by undermining the Medicare system for the elderly, the Medicaid system for the poor, the college loan programme for the ambitious, and the network of rules and regulations that protected the natural environment. But the president, mentally screening his favourite movie High Noon, would go alone into that dusty street and do righteous battle against the bad guys.

The Republican project gave Clinton the chance to define himself by standing stalwart guard over those core achievements of the New Deal and the Great Society which enjoyed broad popular support. He seized the opportunity, cast veto after veto, allowed the government to start closing down as 800,000 federal workers were sent home for three days, and made speech after speech about "the violation of our values". All along, however, he was prepared to concede the fundamental Republican target of balancing the budget within seven years.

Beneath the surface of this battle over the budget, a very parallel drama unfolded within each political party. The dispirited and much-diminished Democrats in Congress, reduced by the 1994 mid-term elections to a largely liberal core which constantly shed southern conservative defectors to the Republicans, grappled for an identity. In the White House was a New Democrat who insisted on being tough on crime, on reforming welfare and exposing American workers to the stormy competition of free trade. In the Congress were protectionists, liberals who deplored America's grim precedence in incarcerating more of its citizens than any other country, and minority legislators who saw welfare reform as a code phrase for abandoning an underclass in which minorities were disproportionately represented.

In the Republican party, the fissures were even more confusing. There were the cautious old hands of the Senate led by Dole, and the firebrands of the House led by Gingrich. There were the Christian Coalition supporters who battled to outlaw abortion, and the liberal Republicans who thought that the sleeping dog was better left undisturbed. There were isolationists and internationalists, passionate free traders and that reborn America First protectionist Pat Buchanan. Adding to the confusion were the fiscal Ayatollahs of the House with their passion for flat taxes, some of them even rallying to repeal the 16th Amendment to the Constitution, which authorises income tax.

It was, therefore, a year of tumultuous political realignment, in which conservatives stopped conserving very much, and tried, in Gingrich's words, "to dismantle the liberal welfare state and replace it with the conservative opportunity society". But Gingrich lost the aura of visionary leadership that he had won by marshalling the new Republican majority. He whined at being treated with insufficient respect aboard the presidential plane, and said that he had reached his target of seven years to balance the budget through "intuition". The House ethics committee, after much delay, appointed an independent counsel to investigate his murky financial affairs, and the Federal Election Commission filed charges in federal court that his Gopac organisation had broken campaign finance laws.

Clinton's authority over his party in Congress was never strong, and the continuing Whitewater embarrassments eroded it further. By the end of the year, the refusal of the president and his aides to comply with subpoenas from the Senate banking committee and to hand over notes of meetings between his private and his presidential lawyers was heading for a clash in the courts between the prerogatives of the executive and the legislature.

By sheer coincidence, this stand-off took place as the billboards of American were plastered with the slogan "Nixon in 96", to promote the

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HIGH NOON IN BUDGET CITY

"DO AS I SAY OR THE OLE FOOL GETS IT!"

Unrestrained capitalism the real issue for Labour

WHILE it is quite understandable for the British Labour party to learn lessons from its Antipodean cousins, and we have much more in common with the Australian labour movement than with the previously idolised American Democrats, Labour will ultimately have to choose its own way. That this is already happening was touched upon by Martin Kettle ("Keating has a lesson for New Labour", December 17), as he described the compact between organised labour and the Australian Labor Party, which protected a section of the population from the impact of privatisation and deregulation, ironically introduced by prime ministers Hawke and Keating. At the moment there is no sign of a similar compact in Britain, and here the debate has moved on: for privatisation, deregulation and tight fiscal control have brought about poverty, unemployment and de-industrialisation on a scale hitherto unknown since the thirties.

No such compact existed in New Zealand, whose last Labour government pursued a radical foreign policy, while unleashing the unfettered forces of the free market, dubbed "Rogernomics" after the finance minister who, in defiance of electoral gravity, pursued monetarist goals with an enthusiasm not even matched by Mrs Thatcher.

So the New Zealand Labour Party languishes at 16 per cent and falling in the polls, and has recently been overtaken by the new Alliance Party, comprising socialists and environmentalists — and now the main opposition.

This all goes to show that, compact or no compact, parties of the left stand or fall on those basic issues of job creation, decent public services and economic growth. And parties of the left will continue to be weak so long as they fail to challenge unrestrained capitalism.
Mark Seddon,
Editor, Tribune, London

MARTIN KETTLE'S report on Australia's Labor government fairly portrays its many achievements. However, the article did not fully acknowledge the importance of the trade unions' role in Australia, which has been about much more than delivering pay restraint in return for the government delivering on the social wage.

Many of Australia's recent industrial and social achievements have their origins in initiatives taken by the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The ACTU itself promoted union mergers and amalgamations, the restructuring of the award system which determines pay levels, and major initiatives on training and superannuation. The accord process has worked so well because the trade union movement recognised the economic challenges facing Australia and was itself prepared to come up with imaginative policies to improve industrial competitiveness, while at the same time seeking to protect and enhance working conditions and trade union organisation.

Kettle suggests that British unions have a narrow wages and conditions agenda, and are unlikely to adopt the strategic approach pursued by the ACTU. However, unions here have also learnt from the Australian experience and from having faced four consecutive terms of Conservative government. Nobody is saying that the accord process could or should be replicated here, but the signs are that unions will indeed have a broad and strategic agenda in any discussions with an incoming Labour government.
Patrick Quinn,
Branscombe, Devon

Target Nigerian regime, not Shell

I AM PUZZLED to find in the Guardian Weekly what amounts to a plea for ethical world management by multinational corporations ("A world forced to keep bad company", December 3). Martin Woollacott states that multinationals should act morally; that there are many governments that behave immorally; and that deregulation and internationalisation of trade and industry have given multinationals great power. But there seems to be a wide gulf between these charges and his conclusion that "If corporations are world managers today, they are not good ones — because they work on the basis of an almost complete separation of trade from politics".

Thank goodness they do. World government by business would be even worse than the national government by business from which we in Britain currently suffer. The problem is surely how to establish democratic international control over multinational business, not how to persuade the multinational "world managers" to govern us more ethically.

If we could maintain a more rigorous distinction between business and government, we might see more plainly that we should be pressing for action against the Nigerian regime, not against Shell.

Those who have been clamouring for a boycott of Shell because of its failure to persuade the Nigerian government not to execute Ken Saro-Wiwa, or its failure to persuade the Nigerian government to allocate more oil revenues to the Ogoni people would, I suspect, be the first to protest if Shell were found to be interfering in the internal political affairs of the UK. Or is business interference in politics all right so long as it is in a cause that we agree with?
Brian Barder,
London

"OVERT violation of normal western ethical principles" is justified by a professor of marketing at Miami University ("Ethics and good business go hand in hand", December 3) in the pursuit of making "significant money".

What is the name of his course, Imperialism 101?
Lois Griffiths,
Christchurch, New Zealand

The saving of Poland

"YOUNG technocrats" governing with "pragmatism and social sensitivity" sweep away the "Thatcherite ideologues" — a beautiful allegory to warm the hearts of Britons who have suffered 16 years of Thatcherism. Unfortunately, Jonathan Steele's article ("Big Bang brought end to communist bogy", November 26) does not accurately portray the events of Poland's recent past. Walesa has lost, but the business of government continues as before.

Steele makes two shrewd observations but fails to follow them through. Kwasniewski's victory certainly represents "the defeat of the anti-communists": in the summer Walesa's poll rating was 8 per cent, but people eventually (reluctantly) backed him as the only man to beat Kwasniewski.

However, there was another factor at work, connected with the "cult of the personality" Steele sees around Walesa: half of those who supported minor candidates in the first round subsequently backed Kwasniewski; and among the undecided, there was a very personal anti-Walesa vote, caused by doubts over his intellectual capability, competence and misgivings about his close ties with the church hierarchy. Walesa's "cult of the personality", once a source of support, now induces a negative reaction. It is this which lost him the election, not economic shock-therapy.

In keeping with the romantic Poland-Britain analogy, Steele wishes luck to the ex-communists, who "replace" the "Thatcherite ideologues", in their "uphill struggle". In fact, for the past two years Poland has been ruled by a parliamentary coalition of the ex-communists (SLD) and the Peasant's Party (PSL).

Time and time again they have forced through legislation, despite numerous vetoes, by obtaining the necessary two-thirds majority to overturn the president's rejections. While progress has been slow, it is the ex-communists who have been running Poland until now and will probably continue until the 1997 parliamentary elections. With Walesa gone there will be less tension, but it is basically "business as usual" in parliament.

Steele finally attacks "Big Bang theorists" without noticing one obvious fact — there is a Big Bang taking place. Along with all post-communist countries, Poland faced a crisis of hidden unemployment in 1989. Shock-therapy dealt with these problems: while unemployment is 14.7 per cent, it is predicted that inflation will rise to around 22 per cent and GNP by 6 per cent next year, the fastest growth in eastern Europe.

God forbid we talk about the "trickle-down effect", but with all its faults, it is through the private sector that Poland can ensure its future prosperity.
Ewa Switala,
Swiebodzin, Poland

Shot in the arm for China

IS IT possible that the Royal Mail knows its history of medicine better than Colin Luckhurst ("Jenner's cure", December 3)? No doubt Edward Jenner did use vaccination in England 200 years ago; but what about the Chinese practice of it precisely 1,000 years ago, when Prime Minister Wang Tan's family were all inoculated by a Taoist monk or nun after Wang's son had died of smallpox? The practice became widespread in China after the 16th century, and was described then by Yu T'ien-Ch'ih and Yu Ch'ang. In their day, too, the practice spread to Turkey where, in 1718, Lady Montagu, the wife of the British ambassador, had her family "variolated". Within the next three years the practice became widespread in Europe for protection against smallpox.
(Prof) Paul Hockings,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,
Chicago, Illinois, USA

Briefly

THE MURDER of the African stowaways and the prosecution of the Ukrainian captain and crew (December 17) will not be the last. At present all shipping companies issue detailed instructions to masters to carry out searches for stowaways before leaving high-risk ports. This is almost impossible due to the size and complexity of modern ships and their minimal crews. Stowaways do not carry passports or identity papers and hence many countries will not accept them. They can spend years effectively imprisoned on merchant ships before being repatriated to their home country.

It is time that the international community accepted that the policy of punitive fines against shipowners is not working and a policy of repatriation of stowaways from the port of arrival to the last port of call is adopted.
(Capt) E J Fitch,
Lewes, Sussex

I MUST challenge Paul Evans's comments on the "arrogance of old King Canute" ("Retreat from the sea", November 26). According to the version of the legend I was taught some 70 years ago, Canute, a modest man, sought to demonstrate to his over-zealous subjects that he was not omnipotent by showing his inability to stem the incoming tide. Apart from a few old fogies like me, who even knows or cares today? I should, however, like to know which version is correct.
D S Havercroft,
Ways-Genappe, Belgium

THE United States's effort in Bosnia is doomed to failure because as soon as there are a couple of American casualties resulting from the action of extremist Serb forces, scenes of hysterical bereaved mothers on US television will force a rapid about-turn in foreign policy.

Because of the scar of Vietnam on the national psyche, the US is incapable of fighting foreign wars in which their own personnel are never really threatened.
Andrew McIntyre,
Dunblane, Scotland

IF THERE has ever been a justification for the contention that the industrialised nations of the North are callously exploiting and wrecking the so-called developing countries of the south, it is BAT Industries reaping a profit of £1.8 billion with the help of "booming sales" of cigarettes to the naive and innocent peoples of the Third World (Finance In Brief, November 19). Isn't it high time that all those shabby and shady companies that deal in death, be it with cigarettes or weapons, were brought to justice?
(Dr) Wilfried Westphal,
Bonn, Germany

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Clinton wins duel in sun

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new Oliver Stone film about the president whose Watergate scandal had an ominous echo in Clinton's Whitewater woes. Tricky Dicky Nixon was to win a triumphant re-election and become a historic foreign policy president before being brought down. Slick Willie Clinton appeared on track for re-election, and could claim great credit for the ceasefire in Northern Ireland, for the Arab-Israeli handshakes on the White House lawn, and for the restoration of a democratically elected president to Haiti. Above all, he could claim to have achieved the Bosnian peace agreement, negotiated on a US Air Force base in Ohio.

Thumpingly repudiated by the mid-term voters at the end of 1994, Clinton was being awarded a sympathetic and even respectful reappraisal by the end of 1995. He might be Slick, but Gingrich looked equally slippery, with a worrying dash of craziness.

After a dismaying first two years in office, Clinton's third year as president was very nearly flawless, in domestic politics and in international stewardship alike. But Clinton's recovery is desperately fragile. There are six major foreign disasters that could easily occur next year, and any one could sink him.

The first is Bosnia, where 20,000 US and 40,000 other Nato and non-Nato troops will be policing a rickety peace agreement in a mine-strewn landscape that is likely to send a dismal parade of body bags home to the US in election year. The second is Mexico, where Clinton's boldness in rallying a $50 billion international bailout for the peso is not so far being rewarded by a return to economic stability.

Democratic rule in Haiti appears not to have taken firm hold yet, and a new flood of boat people in the summer would not help Clinton's re-election. The great gush of sentimental gratitude to Clinton among Irish-Americans hinges on the flimsiest of fudges over the peace talks and disarmament process in Northern Ireland. The nasty flirtation in 1995 with a new cold war against China could easily recur, depending on events in Taiwan and in Hong Kong. The reformed communists have come back to power via the ballot box in Hungary and Poland, and their success in Russia would expose Clinton to unfair but insidious conservative sneers of squandering the cold war victory he inherited from Presidents Reagan and Bush.

In the end, the politics of 1996 will depend on the economy, which continued to grow throughout 1995 in what is now becoming an unusually prolonged period of expansion. But 6 million new jobs since Clinton's election, stunning export and productivity gains and low inflation have not yet combined to produce a sense of comfort and contentment among the vast majority of Americans, whose incomes have stagnated.

If the trend lines continue as they did in 1995, Clinton will be re-elected to continue his High Noon with a Republican Congress. If not, and if Gingrich is right to warn of a Wall Street crash were the budget talks to founder, we should take our seats for a different movie altogether. Perhaps Gunfight at the not-OK Corral would fit the bill.

'Righteous' murders draw protests

Derek Brown in Talyiba reports on the 'honour killings' of Palestinian women

ON THE night of September 8, Rudeina Jemel went to bed with a cup of coffee. Soon afterwards — the coffee was still warm when they found the body — a killer entered her bedroom and shot her twice.

No one has been charged with the murder, although the police held a 19-year-old man for several weeks. Powder burns were found on his clothing, but the police said they did not have enough evidence for an indictment. The man is now free and still living in Taiyiba village. He is Salim Jemel, Rudeina's son.

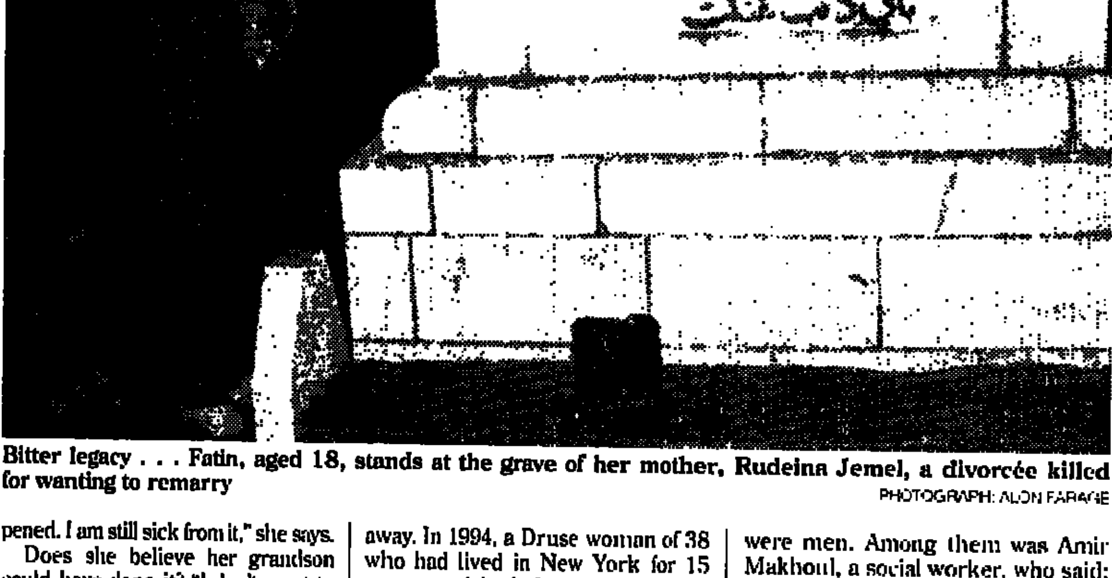
Whoever pulled the trigger, Rudeina Jemel was the victim of what is called here an "honour killing" — a sick euphemism for a degenerate crime. The offence for which she paid with her life was that, after many years as a divorcée, she wished to remarry. The women of her family supported her decision; the men vehemently opposed it.

In Palestinian society the traditional view is that a divorced woman's place is in her parents' home. But Rudeina had already broken with tradition. She was, by all accounts, a remarkable person: an exemplary mother, a successful businesswoman, and a source of strength for all the family.

The house where she died is a spacious two-storey villa that she had built to underline her independence. It is now home to three generations of women who have rejected their menfolk to come together in grief and anger.

"She provided a refuge for all the family. She gave us all so much," says Marwa Jbarah, a niece. "To have killed her is to kill all the women in this family. She gave us power, and now we are lost. In our society, women are supposed to serve all the time, give all the time. They killed my aunt because she was a very strong woman."

Rudeina's mother, Muzayan, aged 70, looks frail and grey. "She didn't do anything wrong," she says of her daughter. "All she did was to decide to get married. I realised it was [an honour killing] in the first minutes after I heard what had happened. I am still sick from it," she says.



Bitter legacy . . . Fatin, aged 18, stands at the grave of her mother, Rudeina Jemel, a divorcée killed for wanting to remarry
PHOTOGRAPH: ALON FARAGE

Does she believe her grandson could have done it? "I don't want to say that," she replies. "I am going to die. I am afraid to go to God and learn I was wrong." Later, she says of Salim: "Right now, I hate him. I can't see him now, but I am the one who looked after him when he was a little kid. He was usually in my arms."

Rudeina's daughter Fatin, aged 18, talks bitterly of the reaction to the killing. "People say they are very sorry, and that they thought my mother was a very respectable woman. But behind our backs, I know they are saying she would not have been killed without a reason."

Fatin is a nurse at a hospital in Netanya, on the Israeli coast. "I think the Israelis I talk to there are more shocked than the people here, because in their society it is impossible to kill a woman like this," she says.

That despairing comment is not, of course, true. Women are killed by their menfolk in Israel (42 in 1992 and 1993), as they are in Britain or any other country. What makes Palestinian society different is that the barbarity is still condoned by traditionalists.

A few months ago, a man knifed his sister in the street in the northern village of Daliyat el-Karmil. He was applauded as the police led him away. In 1994, a Druse woman of 38 who had lived in New York for 15 years revisited her family. Her brother, aged 21 and serving in the Israeli army, upbraided her for her western dress and habits. When she told him to mind his own business, he shot her 20 times with his service rifle. The family refused to condemn the killing.

In 1989, an Arab delegation pleaded with the Israeli courts to treat honour killings leniently, as a long-standing cultural custom. The courts seem to have taken the plea to heart. According to women's groups, most such murderers, who rarely conceal their crime or evade capture, receive prison sentences of seven years or less.

Roughly a sixth of all Palestinians — nearly a million people — live in Israel. Taiyiba lies about a mile west of the so-called Green Line dividing Israel from the occupied West Bank. It is virtually indistinguishable from the towns on the other side of the pre-1967 border, not least in the plight of its womenfolk.

Yet there are signs of change. Recently, a small but noisy procession in Nazareth demanded an end to the practice which, activists say, has claimed the lives of at least 27 women in four years.

More than half the demonstrators were men. Among them was Amir Makhoul, a social worker, who said: "I am here because I believe in it." For many years, he said, people had kept silent about honour killings. "The issue of women was put on the margins of political activity. It is not so much a matter of religion. In general, the religious leaders are still keeping silent, or sometimes they condemn the killings. The real problem is with the traditional political leaders who are always looking to pick up votes."

The point was underlined by another marcher, Ali Rafaa. A lawyer and devout Muslim from Haifa, he passionately denied that honour killings could be justified by the Koran. Pulling from his pocket small white cards bearing passages copied from the Koran, he quoted verse after verse enjoining tolerance and mutual respect between the sexes.

A coalition of women's groups, both Palestinian and Israeli, seems to be picking up momentum. But there are divisions. Some are reluctant to antagonise the traditionalists.

Aida Toumai Suleiman, an activist, insisted that the campaign was directed against all violence committed in the name of family honour. "We are not going against anybody. We are trying to create a more healthy society."

Snipers fly the nests of death

A defiant Serb-held district of Sarajevo is giving up its menacing and bloody secrets, writes **Julian Borger**

THE door to the eleventh-floor flat looks like every other impersonal entrance in the block. According to the painted inscription, it belongs to Vladimir Cosic of the "Serb Army". It is held shut by a piece of string and a peg.

Inside, the apartment is lifeless and bare. On the floor there are a few old clothes, dog ends, some grainy photographs of laughing people a long time ago — and about 20 large, spent bullet cartridges.

"Sniper's nest" seems too cosy a phrase with which to describe it. It is as chilling and desolate as the grave.

A fist-size hole has been punched in the wall and then all but closed again with two metal sheets, leaving an inch-wide slit.

Closing one eye, one can see beyond the concrete banks of Sarajevo's Miljacka River — which forms the front line in this part of town — to a 30-yard stretch of the city's main thoroughfare, known since April 1992 as Sniper Alley.

Near the hole, a series of notches has been scored into the plaster. There are similar marks in other apartments, with equally good views of the boulevard. In one flat, a photographer found what appeared to be a scoreboard, with notches alongside a list of names.

For Sarajevans, this apartment block and others in the Serb-held district of Grbavica have assumed a menace far beyond their grim architecture. Not long ago, if you were in the centre of town and you could see any part of them, you were in mortal danger.

That was before the present ceasefire. After three months of peace in Sarajevo, Vladimir Cosic's room is abandoned, and the muffled sounds filtering through the hole in the wall were the angry slogans and defiant songs of Grbavica's Serb population.

Grbavica, like all the Serb suburbs around Sarajevo, has been handed to the Bosnian government by the Dayton peace agreement brokered by the United States. The Bosnian police are due to take over its streets in little more than three months' time.

Grbavica's residents have more reason than any of the city's Serbs to fear reprisals. Theirs is a rebel-held salient in the heart of the capital. Mortars and artillery shells can be deadly, but sniping is personal. The killer chooses his victim. In Sarajevo, he may even know his victim. At the very least, he knows if the target is a civilian.

Snipers fought on both sides, but Grbavica's tower blocks claimed the most lives by far — and justice will be done. It is not clear whether the United Nations tribunal in The Hague will classify Vladimir Cosic and his fellow snipers as war criminals. Bosnian judges are not likely to have many doubts.

Recently, Grbavica came out on to the street to add its furious voice to the other Serb districts calling for the Dayton map to be changed to let them stay Serb. Young men and women burnt mock copies of the agreement, and stamped on the US flag.

There was talk of the Sarajevo Defence Movement, a local militia that has vowed to defend the Serb suburbs against the government and, if necessary, Nato. The podium was decorated with shrapnel sculpture and photographs of Serb victims.

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Blood sacrifices for the boy child

Up to half the newborn daughters in parts of southern India are killed. **Suzanne Goldenberg** reports from Madurai district, Tamil Nadu



The lucky ones: these infant girls, in Salem hospital, were saved after the local government announced it was putting cots in public spaces where people could deposit unwanted children PHOTO: TATIA PAULE

LAKSHMI has the taut skin and wide eyes of a woman who has seen a lot of suffering. She brought five children into the world and sent three of them to the next within hours of birth. All were girls.

Her first daughter was poisoned, the fourth suffocated with a wet cloth. When the fifth arrived, Lakshmi just bashed the baby's head against a wall. There was no future for her daughters anyway, she said. Her husband earns only 3,000 rupees ($90) a year as a bonded labourer. The family needs a son who can help him earn, not another daughter to feed.

"I am suffering in this life," she said. "My children should not suffer also. That's why I killed them."

She still has a grudge against her daughters — both the living and the dead. "To our family God gave five girls. They made my body weak and my milk dry up. If he had only given sons."

Here in Madurai district, near the southernmost tip of India, girls are seen as nothing more than a drain on family finances. In her village of Kannapuram — a cluster of thatched huts, bleached out by heat and surrounded by scrub — Lakshmi is not alone: several women have killed their daughters or allowed them to be murdered by relatives.

The Indian government and social activists say female infanticide may be illegal, but it is growing. Surveys of some sections of Madurai district claim to show that half of all newborn girls are killed. Girls are most at risk if their mother already has a daughter.

But across India there is little reliable data on how many babies are being sacrificed to the cult of a boy child. Infant mortality figures do not take account of the tiny corpses buried secretly in backyards, or dumped in the jungle. The more alarmist reports claim that in drought-stricken and poor areas, it is a miracle if a second daughter survives at all.

But it is generally agreed that the practice is spreading from upper-caste communities to districts where daughters once were tolerated. The methods of dispatch are terrifyingly similar: poisoning by locally made concoctions; suffocation by forcing a few grains of unhusked rice down tiny throats; starvation or neglect. Some babies are buried alive.

Lakshmi's neighbour, Malkuddi, saved three of her daughters from her husband and in-laws but her luck ran out when the fourth child was also a girl. With her husband threatening to throw her out and her in-laws muttering that she was jeopardising the family line, Malakuddi had little choice. A day after the birth, she fed her unnamed daughter the poisonous sap from a spiky-leaved, knee-high plant that grows all around the village. The baby bled a little from her mouth and nose, and was still. They buried her outside their hut.

Here in Madurai district, village women working with the small non-governmental Urban and Rural Institute for Social Education (Urise) to reduce infant deaths say parents despair of ever raising the money to see their daughters into adulthood.

While elaborate marriages — paid for by the bride's family — are common throughout South Asia, tradition is especially strong among the Kallars of southern Tamil Nadu. For the Kallars, who take comfort in a distant past as tribal chieftains, a woman's life is marked out by ritual, and a family's honour rests on its ability to conduct the ceremonies appropriately.

Ear-piercing, head-shaving, coming-of-age rites, and finally the wedding: all are occasions when a girl's parents are expected to distribute cash and gifts to an extended family — saris for the women, *dhotis* (loin clothes) for the men, 22-carat gold jewellery all around. Then there is dowry. In the Usilimpatti area near Madurai, a prospective groom with a secure government job commands 25,000 rupees ($750) and 80 grams of gold, as well as household goods.

Even after the bride is taken to her in-laws, the obligations continue. Her parents are expected to finance her first pregnancy and delivery — including the customary distribution of gifts. If the bride's father-in-law dies, she is expected to bring consolation gifts. "Our tradition is destroying us," said one of the village social workers. "If we continue this killing, five men will have to marry the same woman."

But marriage is a risky proposition among the Kallars. There is a high rate of unemployment and serious alcohol abuse. For Amarvati, who thinks she is 38 although she looks much older, the arrival of a second unwanted daughter meant the end of her marriage. Her husband, a woodcutter, balked at the expense of raising a daughter and left her. "My husband would not have left if it had been a boy," she said. "I had to kill it. There was no alternative. God made a plan for us to suffer, but we killed the baby and escaped."

THERE IS such ignorance in Muthupechi village that many women see girls as malign spirits. "My fourth daughter started out as a boy," said one woman. "But then somehow it changed inside me." So she killed the baby. Village social workers say it is important to focus on a woman before the baby is born. They take her to the doctor for check-ups and bring her small presents to convince her there can be some benefit in having a girl. Afterwards, they make sure everyone in the village knows a girl has been born, and that they have donated money to pay for her education. Urise claims to have saved scores of babies this way.

On a bigger scale, the Tamil Nadu government of Chief Minister J Jayalalitha has launched several programmes to safeguard girls. Nearly three years ago, Jayalalitha announced she would put cradles in public spaces where people could deposit unwanted children. The rescued children would be put in orphanages at state expense, and the chief minister would pay from her own pocket for their schooling at the same genteel convent in Madras that she attended.

Although the scheme was announced with much fanfare, it does not appear to be working. The Welfare Minister, R Indirakumari, admits it is confined to a single district of Tamil Nadu, and refuses to say how many babies have been saved. Even the most generous estimates speak of only 60 children — not all girls and many no longer babies.

However, Indirakumari claims that just by being there, Jayalalitha helps to save baby girls. "She is a very dynamic chief minister, and an encouragement to all ladies," she said. But critics say female infanticide cannot be viewed in isolation from the low status of women generally. "The cradle programme is like finding a patient with fever and treating the fever without finding out the underlying malaise," said V S Chandralekha, a former civil servant and one of Jayalalitha's fiercest opponents. "It is a semi-literate reaction."

It is also not as imaginative as it seems. In Usilimpatti town, the Indian Council for Child Welfare, a government-supported agency, has been taking in babies for the past five years — but has still saved only 65. Village women say they would rather kill their children than create orphans with no fixed caste identity, who may dishonour the family later.

They are also afraid their daughters may return and seek vengeance. This notion has gained currency since the release last year of a film against infanticide by a popular Tamil director.

In Kartama, the mother saves her unwanted daughter by smuggling her out of the village. The baby grows up to become a doctor, and eventually returns to nurse her aged, ailing father.

Enlivened by song-and-dance scenes with dozens of extras, the director thought he had created a powerful argument against infanticide. But that is not how it is seen in villages like Kannapuram, where the birth of a girl can condemn an entire family to poverty. — *The Observer*

Elite reap benefits of Manila's boom

Economic reform has done little for the 30 million Filipinos living in dire poverty, writes **Kevin Watkins**

THE Makati financial centre in Manila is booming. Property prices have gone through the roof, the stock exchange is the second fastest-growing in the world, and expensive new hotels on Ayala Avenue host Japanese investors who, not so long ago, viewed the Philippines economy as a sick joke.

In the shopping precincts, an orgy of consumerism is under way, as well-heeled Filipinos indulge their tastes for imported designer clothes, Italian furniture and US household appliances. A sense of confidence and opportunity fills the air.

The same cannot be said of Tondo. Here in the vast, sprawling slum areas along the north of Manila Bay, and where more than a million people live in conditions of abject poverty, the air is filled with desperation.

Children wade barefoot through permanent flood-waters contaminated with raw sewage. Diseases such as measles, diarrhoea and respiratory infections are killers, especially in the rainy season.

On "Smoky Mountain", at the north-west tip of the slum, families of eight live in tiny makeshift shacks built on rubbish tips. For those who find work, the going rate is about $3 a day. Most survive by scavenging.

Viewed from Makati, President Fidel Ramos's "Philippines 2000" economic reform programme, which aims at newly industrialising-country status by the turn of the century, appears to be on the verge of success. Economic growth has surged to more than 5 per cent in the past two years, exports are growing rapidly, corporate profits have risen by 60 per cent, and unprecedented amounts of foreign capital are flowing into the country.

But for the 30 million Filipinos living below the poverty line, economic recovery has brought few benefits. In contrast to its neighbours in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean), the Philippines government has failed to combine growth with social equity and redistribution. The richest fifth of the population controls more than half of national income.

The euphoria in financial circles may also be premature. Even on the best-case scenario of 8 per cent growth a year, it will take the Philippines two decades to arrive at the average income levels in Thailand today. The more likely scenario is an economic slowdown, with the country's underfunded infrastructure and grossly inequitable land system impeding growth potential. In recent months inflation has moved into double figures.

All of which leaves President Ramos, now in the third year of a six-year term, with a conundrum. Almost all of the measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been implemented. Since 1992 most public assets have been sold off, banking has been opened up to foreign competition, restrictions on foreign investment have been lifted and import barriers slashed. Once a bastion of protectionism, today the Philippines economy is one of the most liberalised in Asia. Yet scratch the surface and the results have been far from impressive.

Elsewhere in Asean, fiscal policies have been used to translate economic growth into high levels of savings and productive investment. In the Philippines, by contrast, growth has fuelled a consumer boom. Investment rates remain low and imports flood local markets.

One economic lifeline is the export of labour. Unemployment, low pay and rural poverty have forced around 4 million Filipinos to seek work overseas. Today, the $4 billion in remittances provided by these overseas workers is effectively halving the current account deficit.

This dependence on mass labour migration, which divides millions of families, is a source of deep resentment. President Ramos has pledged to phase out overseas labour in the next five years. However, he has yet to explain how he will square this with his government's Memorandum of Understanding with the IMF, which envisages a 20 per cent increase in remittances from overseas workers.

"The brutal fact of the matter is that poverty at home and forced labour migration are a central part of the government's growth strategy," says Professor Leonor Briones, an economist at the University of the Philippines.

Labour migration is the inevitable corollary of the absence of land reform. At least 70 per cent of rural producers turn half of their produce over to landlords. In South Korea and Taiwan, radical land redistribution signalled the start of the economic miracle, but in the Philippines the reins of power remain in the hands of a landed oligarchy. There is little prospect of agrarian reform until this power is broken.

Kevin Watkins works for Oxfam

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Rich family ties of the Red Emperor

The $1 billion corporate empire of Deng Xiaoping has enriched a generation of family, flunkeys and politicians. But what will happen when he dies? **Catherine Field** reports

Chinese whispers . . . Deng's speech has to be 'interpreted' by his daughter Rong

IN A QUIET street just north of Tiananmen Square, two guards in frog-green uniform stand at the entrance to Miliangku, a typical paved courtyard surrounded by unassuming low-rise dwellings. Here stands a large house, at least by Beijing standards: a dining room that comfortably seats a family of 18; a modest lounge decked out with a bright Chinese rug, net curtains and an armchair where the head of the family likes to relax and consult the family astrologer or listen to the radio in the evening.

You might think it belonged to a party official rewarded for years of unstinting service, a man of ungarnished tastes, content with three meals a day and the sight of his grandchildren at play.

But the home of Deng Xiaoping, China's Red Emperor, a diminutive 91-year-old with ultimate authority over a nation of 1.2 billion people, harbours a court that is accumulating wealth and power on a scale unprecedented for any Chinese dynasty since the Manchu era. The Dengs' personal wealth is a closely-guarded secret, but experts estimate that the family controls assets worth at least $1 billion and perhaps as much as $2.5 billion.

Shamelessly exploiting the Deng name in a country where *guanxi* (connections) are virtually an instinct, the patriarch's three daughters and two sons, extended family and supporters have China's top positions in their grip.

Yet as Deng's health declines, the family's fears rise: for his death will unleash the threat of disclosure and destroy the foundations of its stability and wealth.

Deng is now said to be a virtual shell, incapable of walking without the help of two people. His blurred speech is incomprehensible without the aid of his youngest daughter, Rong. His hands shake, apparently from Parkinson's disease, and his eyes are glazed. He was last seen in public in February 1994 at the time of the lunar New Year. He looked so frail that, far from sending a message of continuity to the public, he ignited all sorts of rumours, from his impending to actual death. The stock markets in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Shenzhen nosedived.

But today the élite still talk up his health. Prime Minister Li Peng in September broke taboo of not commenting on Deng's health, saying he had visited the ailing leader "recently" and adding: "I can tell you that he is doing well." His family has been reinforcing the official message. On a trip to Macau, Deng's eldest daughter Lin said: "I am sure he can visit Hong Kong in 1997. Rumours about my father's allegedly critical state of health have been reported some 300 times." Deng Nan, his middle daughter and the least controversial of his children, told Charles Wang, a visiting American businessman, at a private luncheon in Beijing in October that her father is still able to play bridge, although says Wang: "She said that she now sits behind him and tells him what to do."

No family is more aware of the caprices of fate and power than the Dengs. During his remarkable life, Deng has seen four changes of regime, endured civil war and survived three purges by Mao Zedong. He saw China plunged into famine by the folly of the Great Leap Forward, then thrown into near-anarchy under the Gang of Four. The quiet pragmatist saw many men fall out of favour with the throne and hurled to their doom.

For Deng's children, the Cultural Revolution was the deepest trauma, branding them with the experience of humiliation and even torture. Deng himself was exiled to the countryside where he lived in a bamboo house and operated a machine lathe at a tractor-repair shop.

Deng's brother, Shuping, committed suicide after he was humiliated by Red Guards, and the patriarch's eldest son, Pufang, according to his sister, flung himself from a fourth-floor window, trying to flee his tormentors. Pufang, his spine severely damaged, was dumped on a filthy bed in a paupers' clinic, where he lived on a daily bowl of stewed cabbage and a black steamed bun and earned a pittance by weaving baskets.

Such cruelty bred in all the Dengs an awareness of the real nature of Chinese political society: lawless, merciless and vengeful. It also helped to forge an iron-clad sense of family — the only possible security when peril is all around. Those who know the Dengs are impressed with the Sicilian-like warmth and solidarity of the clan, and the unquestioning devotion to the great man at the top.

But loyalty and unity are not in themselves enough for survival. To that end, the Dengs have armed themselves with the best that money and power can provide. The children have received the finest education available in China, topped up with post-graduate studies in the United States, a phenomenal advantage for mainland Chinese. Over the past 15 years, they have stealthily spread their tentacles throughout the Communist Party, the military and the administration. And like other great communist families, they have greedily eyed the rich pickings that came up for grabs after Deng opened up the Chinese economy in the 1980s.

But it was in the rush to enter business that the Dengs made their biggest blunder — one that generated immense public resentment and even now may prejudice their ability to survive when Deng goes to meet Marx. In the early stages of the economic reforms, in 1984, Deng Pufang used his connections to set up a trading firm, Kang Hua, capitalising it with donations towards a fund he set up to help the disabled. The profits generated would also go to the disabled.

Eager to impress the emperor's son, state companies and bureaucrats showered the wheelchair-bound entrepreneur with cash, permits or other favours in the confidence that this would secure a quid pro quo or at least immunity while the imperial fiat lasted.

But corruption gradually wormed its way in. Among Kang Hua's documented scams were 10,000 videocassette recorders that were illegally imported and sold on the local market, and turned out to be obsolete. Hundreds of Japanese cars were sneaked in and resold at huge profits. The firm monopolised the Beijing taxi business, to the point where passengers were too scared to complain about taxi drivers in case they got into trouble with Kang Hua. The company scoffed at million-dollar tax bills, bribed local officials who stood in the way of business deals and routinely violated regulations on foreign exchange.

BY SEPTEMBER 1988, Pufang's fledgling enterprise had grown into a many-headed monster, reaping profits of 50 million yuan ($6 million) a year, and was fast spreading out of control, according to Cheng Lu, a former employee. The People's Daily reported — but only in its overseas edition — that at its height Kang Hua had 58 second-tier companies, of which 33 were direct subsidiaries and 25 regional subsidiaries controlled by local party officials, as well as 133 third-tier companies.

The princelings — the sons and daughters of the ruling élite — clamoured for jobs in Kang Hua. At one point, the conglomerate had more than 60 top Communist Party cadres on its payroll and four government ministers. Pufang was seduced by the glamour, trading his humble Toyota Crown saloon for a Mercedes 380 with driver and gun-toting bodyguards, and surrounding himself with slick young executives. It was a far cry from the late 1960s, when Pufang was hauled around Beijing on the flatbed of a tricycle, pedalled by a friend.

By May 1989, Kang Hua and Deng Pufang had become synonymous with graft and influence-peddling. Although no concrete evidence has surfaced to suggest that Pufang himself was corrupt, the scandal helped to fuel the protest movement in Tiananmen Square, with the horrific crackdown that followed. "Deng Pufang was the first in the family to engage in business and become a target because Kang Hua was one of the four largest business conglomerates in China," says Joseph Cheng, director of the Contemporary Chinese Research Centre in Hong Kong.

The family quickly learnt the lessons of 1989 — the Kang Hua debacle, the Tiananmen massacre and the traumatic fall of the "fraternal" regimes of the Soviet bloc. The golden rule was: gain influence, but not prominence, recalling the proverb, "the fatter the pig, the likelier it will end up in the pot".

The first task was to resolve the Kang Hua problem. The corporation was wound up. Pufang has never ventured back into business again, although he is rumoured to have a Swiss bank account running into eight figures. He remains an energetic activist for the disabled, but has had to renounce his well-known political ambitions.

The most visible Deng outside China is the old man's eldest daughter, Lin, aged 54. Overweight, myopic and with a taste for voluminous floral dresses, Lin is vice-president of the Chinese Association for the Advancement of International Friendship, a job that takes her on frequent foreign trips.

Lin's personal power base is boosted through marriage. Her husband, Wu Jiangchang, is chairman of the China National Non-Ferrous Metals Industry Corporation (CNNC), which supervises 300 medium- and large-scale enterprises and owns a Hong Kong property firm. Even though CNNC manufactures metals, Wu is also chairman of the government body that regulates the metals industry.

The real bruiser in the family is the youngest daughter, Rong, aged 45. She is a graduate of politics at Johns Hopkins University and also worked in the Chinese embassy in Washington where, according to diplomats, she spied on overseas Chinese for the secret service at home.

Rong has benefited enormously from her closeness to Deng Xiaoping, whom she charmed by singing to him during the dark moments in the Cultural Revolution. As his personal assistant, she tells her father what is happening in China and the outside world, and passes on his responses to outsiders.

Rong secured a $1 million fee from Rupert Murdoch last year to write a two-volume biography. The first volume, Deng Xiaoping My Father, "violated an unspoken party regulation against senior cadres writing autobiographies or allowing their offspring to pen hagiographic pieces while they are still alive", according to Willy Wo Lap-Lam, author of China After Deng Xiaoping.

Rong's position is further enhanced by the power wielded by her husband, He Ping, head of Poly Group Corporation, a subsidiary of the People's Liberation Army. Poly Group controls or has interests in 100 other firms, generating annual revenue of at least a billion dollars from trading in property and exporting Chinese arms to unstable regimes, such as Iran, Syria and Pakistan.

DENG'S youngest son, Zhifang, received a PhD in physics at Rochester University, New York, and his first child was born in the US, causing much sniggering that Deng Xiaoping's grandson is an American. Zhifang is chief executive of Shougang Concord Grand, the property flagship of Shougang, China's third-biggest steel corporation. He is a close associate of Zhou Beifang, Shougang's former head, who is being held on corruption charges for unspecified "serious economic crimes".

The rumour in Beijing is that Zhou Beifang implicated Zhifang in a bid to save himself, and that, in order to get Zhifang off the hook, Deng's family agreed to toe the line about their father's health in the interests of political stability.

How has the élite become gloriously rich? "In the early 1980s, a lot of children started enterprises and became wealthy because they had connections," explains Cheng. "If you can obtain permits to import or export something, that is a tremendous asset." Use of family names to influence business is expressly banned under a 1985 edict from the state council, China's cabinet.

But the most glittering gold mines were opened up after Tiananmen, when Deng accelerated the opening-up of the Chinese economy in an apparent attempt to appease the masses. Chinese firms expanded abroad, and foreign investors flocked to China.

A generation of politicians owe their ascent or survival to Deng, an enormous spiritual debt under China's Confucian system of relationships. But in the longer term, the Dengs and those associated with them, are threatened by the emergence of a generation of 40-somethings who crave power but have no emotional ties with the "Immortals" who fought the revolutionary war.

The task for these next leaders will be to cleanse the national soul of Tiananmen Square's bloodstains. The Deng name then may no longer be a magic shield: "When a man becomes an official, his wife, children, dogs, cats and even chickens fly up to heaven," says a Chinese proverb. "When he falls, they fall with him." — *The Observer*

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The ghosts of Nuremberg

A tribunal has been set up to try war crimes in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia; the last tribunal was set up 50 years ago to try Nazi leaders. Was justice served then — and will it be now, asks **Richard Norton-Taylor**

FIFTY YEARS ago last month, the Nuremberg trial of "war crimes" opened to a fanfare of rhetoric amid a collective purging of guilt and forced optimism about the future.

Nuremberg was hailed by Sir Norman Birkett, one of the tribunal judges, as "the greatest trial in history". Sir Hartley Shawcross, Britain's chief prosecutor, confidently predicted the tribunal would "provide a contemporary touchstone and an authoritative and impartial record to which future historians may turn for truth, and future politicians for warning". Fifty years later, these words have a hollow ring, after crimes often perpetrated by the Nuremberg victors — the bombing of Cambodia during the Vietnam war, for example, or the torturing of Algerians fighting for independence — or crimes to which the West turned a blind eye: Saddam Hussein's gassing of Iraqi Kurds, for instance, and the killing of a quarter of a million people, many of them civilians massacred in cold blood, in the former Yugoslavia.

The legacy of Nuremberg continues to haunt the West. Last month, Erich Priebke, an 82-year-old former SS captain, was extradited from Argentina to Italy to face trial for his role in the massacre of 335 Jews and resistance fighters in the Ardeatine caves near Rome in 1944. (He insists that any culpability on his part was the result of obeying orders.) Next year, the first alleged Nazi war criminal to be prosecuted in Britain under the 1991 War Crimes Act is expected to face trial: Szymon Serafinowicz, aged 84, is accused of murdering four unknown Jews in German-occupied Byelorussia.

For the first time since Nuremberg, an international criminal tribunal has been set up to try war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic are charged with being individually responsible for genocide and crimes against humanity. More than 40 others, including Croat Serbs and Bosnian Croats, have been indicted. But only one is held in custody — Dusko Tadic, a Bosnian Serb charged with murdering and raping Muslims and Croats during the ethnic cleansing campaign in north-west Bosnia in 1992.

Robert Jackson, chief US prosecutor at Nuremberg, described in his opening speech how, at Dachau, victims were immersed in freezing water, then warmed by a hot bath. He described what he called the Nazi scientific triumph of rewarming with animal heat: "The victim, all but frozen to death, was surrounded with the bodies of living women until he revived and responded to his environment by having sexual intercourse. Here Nazi degeneracy reached its nadir." Such cruel and obscene experiments, he added, were not the work of "underling-degenerates but of master-minds high in the Nazi conspiracy".

Other Nuremberg prosecutors referred to sterilisation, castration and abortion programmes, to enslavements, assassinations and murders in countries occupied by the Nazis, to the Berlin directive that "the fertility of the Slavs is undesirable", to the systematic extermination of gypsies and Jews. The core crimes were genocide and crimes against humanity. Yet transcripts of the 10-month trial show how relatively little time was devoted to these atrocities. "The victors did not want to see the war as a war against genocide of the Jews," says Anthony Glees, director of European Studies at Brunel University.

For these charges raised uncomfortable questions, reflected on in a recent book, Rwanda And Genocide In The Twentieth Century (Pluto Press), by Alain Destexhe, former secretary general of Médecins sans Frontières and now a Belgian senator. "During the second world war," he notes, "at no time did the Allies modify their military objectives in order to save Jews, even after 1944 when there was no longer any possible doubt as to what was happening. Half a million Jews were murdered in Auschwitz between March and November 1944, when the last gassings took place, yet the railway lines leading to the death camps were never targeted."

The 21 defendants at Nuremberg were charged not only with Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes (including shooting prisoners of war) but with The Common Plan or Conspiracy (plotting a war of aggression), Count 1, and Crimes against Peace (waging aggressive war), Count 2. The trial got bogged down in lengthy arguments about Counts 1 and 2, which concealed the crime of genocide but created their own problems. As E L Woodward, historical adviser to the Foreign Office, pointed out: "Up to September 1, 1939, His Majesty's Government was prepared to condone everything Germany had done to secure her position in Europe."

While the West laid itself open to the charge of appeasement — as it has done since — the Soviet Union was also in the frame. "The indictment for crimes against peace was a phoney charge; if the defendants were guilty then so were the Russians," says David Cesarani, professor of modern Jewish studies at Manchester University. If the Nazis were guilty of crimes against peace and waging aggressive war, then so were the Russians, who had attacked Poland, Finland and the Baltic states at the beginning of the war (and then there were Stalin's gulags). It took Moscow 50 years to admit responsibility for the massacre — for which they had blamed the Nazis — of nearly 15,000 Polish officers during the second world war, including those killed in the Katyn forest in Byelorussia.

Nuremberg prosecutors laid themselves open to the charge that they were indulging in victors' justice, a charge that undermined their moral authority. The victorious powers were vulnerable to the "dirty hands" defence — that they were conveniently ignoring their own actions. Shawcross confesses in his recent memoirs, Life Sentence: The Memoirs of Lord Shawcross (Constable), to be worried by the "historical view that by their own conduct of the war, the Allies had lost the moral authority to conduct the trial. I have always felt it was difficult to defend our saturation bombing of Dresden and Hamburg at a time when Germany was already collapsing. I have felt a similar difficulty about the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — especially if, as is now believed by some, this horrific demonstration was intended not so much to bring an early end to the war with Japan as to warn the Soviet Union of the power available to the West."



Facing war crimes charges . . . Radovan Karadzic (below, right) and General Ratko Mladic, and Nazi leaders on trial at Nuremberg (above)

Even those who accept that Nuremberg was deeply flawed insist that the trial was none the less significant. "For the first time," Cesarani says, "individuals were put on trial for sending their people to war and ordering them to commit atrocities . . . It was no longer enough to say 'We were just obeying orders'." The Nuremberg trials, says Richard Goldstone, the South African judge and chief prosecutor at the war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, "were a meaningful instrument for avoiding the guilt of the Nazis being ascribed to the whole German people".

JACKSON told the Nuremberg tribunal in his opening address: "The idea that a state, any more than a corporation, commits crimes, is a fiction." Shawcross echoed this: "It is no use having a leader unless there are also people willing and ready to serve their personal greed and ambition by helping and following him." But the very title of the tribunal — "German Major War Criminals" — gave away its limitations. The world had to wait, notably at the Eichmann trial, for a fuller, more complete, picture. It showed, as Destexhe puts it, "how the overall plan to exterminate the Jews was part of a huge bureaucratic process, a mosaic of minuscule fragments, each one individually very ordinary and commonplace . . . Only a tiny percentage of those who participated in the genocide actually shot a Jew or turned on the gas. It was the bureaucrats who helped to destroy the Jewish people, often whilst remaining at their desks."

Of the tens of thousands estimated by Shawcross as having committed "odious crimes which cried out for punishment", a few hundred were sentenced to death by the victorious occupying powers. The War Crimes Act is an admission of Whitehall's failure, or reluctance, to vet those implicated from entering Britain. Glees, an adviser to the War crimes inquiry that led to the Act, estimates that there are about 100 "serious suspects" still alive in Britain.

The reasons why the UN Security Council agreed to set up a war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, when so many other cases since Nuremberg have been ignored, are not hard to find. As Goldstone has put it, conduct there was "reminiscent of the Holocaust — 'ethnic cleansing' and photographs which could have been taken in Nazi concentration camps. It was happening in Europe and that had become inconceivable in the post-Nuremberg era". In other words, it was a result of pressure from public opinion and a guilty conscience. (The Rwanda case was easier; the Tutsi-led government, which brought the massacres to an end, itself requested the setting up of a tribunal.)

It is difficult to see how the Yugoslav tribunal will amount to anything more than a symbolic, conscience-appeasing, gesture. It seems totally unrealistic to believe that Karadzic and Mladic, or the others indicted for war crimes, will be handed over, especially given the continuing fragility of the peace process. Goldstone is not even getting support from those he could have expected would co-operate fully in his investigations. Last month he complained to the Clinton administration about its failure to provide him with information gathered by US intelligence about the Bosnian Serb attack on Srebrenica and the massacre of Muslims there in July — after Karadzic and Mladic had been indicted for war crimes.

"The only information we have received of genuine usefulness," he told Steve Mathias, legal adviser at the US embassy in The Hague, "was the imagery of the potential mass grave sites relating to the fall of Srebrenica . . . The imagery was provided to us, however, only after it was leaked to the press." Reports by the Independent British American Security Information Council (Basic) that US intelligence intercepted telephone communications between Mladic and the Serbian Army chief of staff, General Momcilo Perisic, about the impending attack on Srebrenica, have been confirmed by US officials. Germany and France are also believed to be withholding from Goldstone information about war crimes in Bosnia.

Setting up the Yugoslav and Rwanda tribunals, says Goldstone, "is a major step ushering in a new era in the history of international law and especially international humanitarian law . . . the prosecution of [the] war crimes, I hope, will be seen with hindsight to have been the beginning of a new era of enforcement of international humanitarian law". We shall see. If Nuremberg — where the prosecutors, unlike in Bosnia, had full access to the perpetrators — is held up as a precedent then the portents are scarcely promising.

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From glorious summer to winter of discontent

James Lewis

FALLING school standards, crime-related violence, rail breakdowns and inaccurate timetables, squabbling royals and bishops, complaining teachers and doctors, health scares, serial murder, sleaze in high places — the year's headlines made for gloomy reading.

Future historians may well find 1995 to have been a pretty ordinary sort of year, but most people living through it have not seen it that way. Poll after poll recorded heightened levels of job anxiety, insecurity, and stress-related illness. Little wonder that the "feel-good" factor continues to elude a government desperate to find something — anything — to ward off defeat at the next general election.

One of the enduring memories of this year will be the sight of columns of road tankers ferrying water from Northumberland to prevent the taps of Yorkshire from running dry — in December. The operation, costing £1 million a day, was the only alternative to cutting off water supplies on alternate days, which would have left some people without water on Christmas Day.

True, the glorious summer had been Britain's driest since 1727, and the privatised water companies found it difficult to keep up with demand. Consumers, already annoyed by what they perceived as the indecently high salaries and perks that the water bosses were found to be awarding themselves, were infuriated to discover that more than a quarter of the country's water was running to waste through unrepaired leaks in the pipe network. As the year drew to a close, many of the water companies were still imposing hosepipe bans. And fire officers prayed to be spared a major conflagration which could exhaust their water resources.

Of course, things could have been worse, but the sight of columns of tankers was, to the older generation, all too reminiscent of some wartime emergency, or perhaps a relief operation in a Third World country: another piece of evidence to suggest that once-trusted services could no longer be relied on.

As well as disrupting water supplies, the lovely summer blew a serious hole in the profits of tour operators, whose usual customers found it warmer — and cheaper — to stay at home rather than fly to the Mediterranean.

It may have been the heat that pushed the Prime Minister's patience to the limit. In mid-year, to everyone's surprise, John Major resigned as Tory leader and triggered a contest that could otherwise not have been held until November. It was a challenge to his Eurosceptic tormentors to "put up or shut up". The only challenger, the former Welsh Secretary, John Redwood, was trounced by 218 votes to 49.

The Prime Minister's hand should have been strengthened and, for a while, it seemed to be. But the death of several members of the parliamentary party, and the first defection by a sitting Conservative to Labour — Alan Howarth (Stratford-upon-Avon) — have reduced the Tories' Commons majority to five.

Mr Major can afford no further rifts, so his public utterances have come to sound increasingly hostile to the European Union.

While this is partly done to buy the loyalty of his own Eurosceptics, it is also to emphasise one of the few stretches of "clear blue water" that now lie between Tory policies and those of Tony Blair's "new" Labour Party. The Conservatives won an opt-out from the social chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, but Labour would opt back in.

The social policy agreement aims to harmonise Europe by requiring large employers to consult workers on issues that affect them; allow fathers paternity leave; and give part-time workers the same entitlements, pro rata, as full-timers. The Tories argue that this would impose intolerable burdens on employers. Labour begs to differ.

Labour's stance, and its promise to legislate for a minimum wage, has, surprisingly, not harmed it in the eyes of businessmen, many of whom are starting to wonder whether a Labour government might be better for them than a re-elected Tory one dominated by Eurosceptics.

A number of polls over the year have suggested that the Tories are losing their title as the natural party of business. The latest — a survey of senior managers by the Institute of Management — showed support for the Conservatives had fallen to 42 per cent (from 60 per cent in 1992). A startling 32 per cent said they would vote Labour (against just 12 per cent at the last election).

But Mr Blair could be skating on thin ice. His party has only grudgingly allowed him to break Labour's over-cosy relationship with the trade unions. The forbearance of left-wingers, who have sacrificed many principles in the interests of unity and electability, might finally snap if he fell into the trap of cuddling up too close to industry. But he did, surprisingly, get away with travelling to Australia to fraternise with the media mogul and arch enemy of "old" Labour, Rupert Murdoch.



Labour's main fear is that it will fail to shake off its image as the party of high spending and high taxation, as shadow chancellor Gordon Brown is now hinting at a tax rate that could start as low as 10 per cent. But the belief — also held by the Government — that the voters can be bribed with promises of tax cuts may be misplaced. A British Social Attitudes survey, taken just before the November budget, found that only 4 per cent of voters wanted tax cuts, while 58 per cent wanted them increased to pay for more spending on health, education and social benefits.

Animal rights lobbyists made their presence felt throughout the year, blockading harbours and demonstrating at airports against the export of live animals, particularly veal calves. One woman died when she fell under the wheels of a lorry. Since many of the demonstrators were elderly and otherwise law-abiding citizens, the police felt unable to deploy heavy-handed tactics and, instead, resorted to sheer force of numbers to contain them. It proved to be a costly operation.

The gay lobby was also active, "outing" Anglican clergymen and insisting on the right of homosexuals to serve in the armed forces. The courts rejected appeals for compensation by four, including a naval lieutenant-commander, who claimed to have been wrongfully dismissed from the services. Lord Justice Simon Brown expressed his sympathy for them and urged the Ministry of Defence to review its rules.

The four are now taking their case to the House of Lords and, if defeated, will go to the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that their treatment is a breach of the European Convention. The Government may yet decide to change the rules before that happens.

It was not a good year for the Anglican church which, besides losing some £80 million in property deals, is still seriously divided over the ordination of women, over homosexual clergy, and whether or not it is acceptable to "live in sin".

Sooner or later it will have to declare its position on the monarchy if the heir to the throne, Prince Charles, is divorced. Could it countenance a divorced or remarried king as head of the church? Meanwhile, in the latest instalment of the enthralling royal soap opera, Princess Diana hinted that she considered her estranged husband unfit to be king, the inference being that the top job should go to their eldest son, William. As his mother — and a popular figure in her own right — she can hardly be shuffled off by the royal establishment, which will probably have to buy her silence by offering her the "ambassadorial" role she seems to want.

It was a pretty miserable year for anybody who had anything to do with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard. Because of some embarrassing prison escapes — notably from Parkhurst, on the Isle of Wight — he sacked the head of the prison service, Derek Lewis, who protested that day-to-day interference by the Home Office made his job impossible.

Not even the National Lottery has brought about the universal happiness that the Government imagined

A growing rift between the judiciary and the Government is also largely attributable to Mr Howard, whose decisions were overturned on at least eight occasions by the courts, which ruled that he had either acted unfairly or exceeded his powers.

Twelve months ago, the peace process in Northern Ireland had appeared to be making headway, but now it has stalled in spite of the "twin-track" formula which it was thought, after President Clinton's visit to Belfast at the beginning of this month, would offer a realistic way forward. The formula was supposed to allow preparatory political talks to go ahead between the Northern Ireland parties and the British and Irish governments while a three-man international commission considered ways of decommissioning illegally held arms.

The IRA, however, has since ruled out any hand-over of weapons and described the demand for surrender as "an absolute barrier to progress". It could, of course, be just another piece of brinkmanship, but Mr Major is unlikely to relinquish his demand for the surrender of some arms as a "confidence-building" measure.

The political talks are also more likely to be serial monologues than real dialogue. David Trimble, new leader of the majority Ulster Unionists, has already rejected an invitation to talks in Dublin as "impudent". Ian Paisley, leader of the smaller Democratic Unionists, will only talk to the British government, and then only about his own proposals. Nor will he talk to George Mitchell, the American chairman of the disarmament commission, though all the other parties involved will.

A settlement, which would do much to enhance Mr Major's stature, and perhaps his party's fortunes, seems a long way off. Before then, the Scott inquiry will have published its report, almost certainly damaging to the Government, on Britain's sale of arms to Iraq in breach of its own embargo. Sufficient evidence has already been heard to show that some ministers were aware of the trade and, at the very least, turned a blind eye to it. What is worse is that they went to great lengths to cover up their involvement and were prepared, if necessary, to watch innocent men sent to prison. It will not win them votes.

The "feel-good factor" did appear briefly on two occasions when the VE and VJ Day celebrations offered opportunities to recall national solidarity and success in battle. The opening of the Channel Tunnel was another mark of achievement, though diminished because revenue so far has been insufficient to cover the interest payments on Eurotunnel's £8 billion debt. The payments have been suspended for 18 months.

Even the National Lottery, now 13 months old, has not brought about the universal happiness that the Government envisaged. The scheme has certainly created a few more millionaires and its promoting consortium, Camelot, should be extremely happy with a weekly profit of £1 million, which enabled it to recover its start-up costs in months rather than years.

Many charities, however, have complained of a reduction in their traditional income, and pools promoters and bookmakers have shed hundreds of jobs. Nor is everyone happy with the way lottery profits are distributed: too much to the arts in London, too little to sports in the provinces, too much to some charities, too little to others. Camelot and the Government could only reply that everybody would benefit — eventually.

To add insult to injury, Richard Branson, the high-profile head of Virgin and a failed bidder to run the National Lottery, alleged that he was offered a bribe to withdraw his bid by Guy Snowden, chairman of the American corporation GTech, which has a 22 per cent stake in Camelot.

Drinkers had a better year. The Government reversed a century of efforts to curb drinking by setting a higher safe limit of units of alcohol per day. Protests over the move were headed by the World Health Organisation and some critics dubbed the review a "boozers' charter". Mr Howard did his bit and allowed the pubs to stay open longer on Sundays. And the Chancellor, Kenneth Clark, cut the tax on whisky.

Hate lurks behind country hedges

Rural racism is a little noticed but growing problem. Report by **Jonathan Steele**

IT TOOK barely 24 hours for Middle England's newest scandal, the growth of rural racism, to slip behind the hedgerows again. The morning after white thugs jeered and threatened Paddy Ashdown on a late-night walk through Yeovil as he checked out stories of racist attacks, the Somerset town's Asian shopkeepers were happy to tell reporters about the abuse they regularly suffer. The next day it was frightened normality once more: "No interviews, please. No names. We don't want to provoke them."

The victims' silence graphically illustrated the riddle which race relations workers like to try on strangers. Who is visible and invisible at the same time? Answer: black people living in England's villages and country towns.

"They are highly visible in that they stand out from the crowd and people in rural areas are not used to thinking of England as a multi-ethnic community," says a report by the National Alliance of Women's Organisations. "They are invisible in terms of provision because they are small minorities."

Vishnu moved to Cornwall with his English wife 14 years ago. His life there has been a catalogue of abuse. Although he describes himself as an assertive man, he is unwilling — like the take-away owners in Yeovil — to have the restaurant he runs identified in print. He has enough trouble already with the gangs who tap heavily on the window. "You have to go out and see what's going on," he says. "Then they often punch you. It's mainly yobbos who've got drunk and want a fight." The last such case was just over a month ago, but this random, racist violence has been frequent. "At first I used to get gobsmacked-looks in the street, just like that. They'd not seen many black people in their lives before."

He usually reports the violence to the police but complains that "they take a very lackadaisical attitude. They have no training in racial awareness. They plead lack of funds, but do nothing because they want to keep the statistics of racial incidents low."

At the other end of the country, in a small and pretty South Yorkshire village, Peter has an ugly story of constant racial harassment. His dark, Arab looks have proved too much for a neighbour who has kept up a sapping barrage of: "Fuck off back to where you came from." Four years of insults have put increasing strains on his marriage — to an Englishwoman — and on his two school-age children.

Peter has taken his problems to the district council, but action under ordinary nuisance regulations is not easy; neighbours' disputes lead to shrugs, there are counter-allegations and proof is hard to find. Racial harassment is seen as a novelty in rural areas. Local authorities often refuse to accept the problem.

When Eric Jay, the author of a study on racism in the South-west, wrote to community health councils, police forces and church leaders to ask for help, he found that "for three-quarters of them, racial equality seems not to be on the agenda". Several respondents commented: "We have no problem here because we have no black people," a statement which Jay calls racist — because it assumes that it is the presence of blacks which creates trouble.

The Jay report was published by the Commission for Racial Equality three years ago. Since then, there have been reports on Norfolk and Shropshire and on the isolation of black and ethnic minority women in rural areas.

Britain's ethnic minorities form 6.2 per cent of the population, but in rural areas it is more like 1.6 per cent. The reports were the first steps at helping these scattered families. Racial Equality Councils have been set up in several shire counties and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations has appointed Perminder Dhillon to run a rural anti-racism project.

"Blacks and ethnic minorities are perceived as in-comers and not belonging," she says. The realisation that Britain has irreversibly become multicultural has not yet penetrated many rural areas. Ignorance is often rife. Ms Dhillon recalls a conference where a colleague stared at her sandalled feet and commented: "I didn't realise your soles are whiter than the rest of your skin."

Identity confusion also tends to be stronger where a black child may be the only one in its class. An Asian family fled from Wales after their 12-year-old son scrubbed his arm with bleach in the hope of escaping from persistent bullying.

Reports of rural prejudice deter many urban blacks from going to the country. "I don't feel safe going on holiday in a rural area in Britain. I'd rather go abroad," Perminder Dhillon recalls one Asian man admitting. The Black Environment Network was set up to encourage young blacks from inner cities to visit the countryside, initially in organised trips to nature reserves or mountaineering. "People have to learn to enjoy the country before they can be asked to look after it," says Jakesh Mahey, its administrator. The irony is that many urban British blacks and Asians have parents who come from villages in the Indian subcontinent or the Caribbean. Yet rural British attitudes may turn this island into a green and unpleasant land for them.

The Archers, Britain's longest running radio soap, has taken on the subject, bringing an Asian woman solicitor, Usha, to Ambridge. Episodes this year have recounted stones being thrown through her windows and dog mess shoved through her letter box.

Newsy incidents, like the attack on Paddy Ashdown or the fate of Usha, highlight rural racism, but some believe they can also distort. "The Ambridge episodes manage to shift the blame from the local community to outsiders. They telescope racial violence into generalised vandalism and thuggery. By implication, racism has become a kind of virus which infects a few bad people who inhabit the city and roar around on motorbikes," says Jenny Bourne of the Institute of Race Relations.

"Nowhere in Ambridge do we hear of racism as an issue in society. In a real-life Ambridge, its farmers would worry that Usha would depress house prices, Kate would argue with her father that all immigrants were not scroungers, and Shula would try to stop Martha from scare-mongering that the shop was about to be taken over by Asians. Without argument between characters over racism, the resort to the benevolent saviour — the community of friends — is politically inept."

The big issue for Jenny Bourne and her fellow workers is the unpublicised drip-drip of racism in schools and at work. In the countryside, this meets less challenge.

Additional reporting by Martin Wainwright



Suffering in silence . . . Women in ethnic minorities are often isolated in rural area PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Life after the anger in Brixton

Michael Massive argues that in the wake of the disturbances police must face up to local criticism

THERE'S nowt so queer as folk. Different people have different views of the same incident. Let us regard the headline in the Daily Mail on December 14 which read, "Brixton mob on rampage". The article began: "Hundreds of rioters rampaged through Brixton last night, looting shops and torching cars after the death of a black youth in custody."

As someone who was actually in the vicinity at the start of the incident, I saw something that contradicted various press reports. Many people moving around the area who were caught up in traffic diversions merely saw a mass mobilisation of police officers. Some local people regarded the incident as a police riot and described the police action as "the invasion of an army of occupation".

To many, the death of Wayne Douglas in a Brixton police cell earlier this month was far more deserving of front-page outrage than the smashing of a few commercial shop windows — but that would be down to their subjective opinion and their own perception of what they believed had taken place during the arrest of Mr Douglas.

Wayne Douglas was the third black male to die in police custody over the past 12 months. The cases of Shiji Lapite and Brian Douglas (no relation) also precipitated outrage among London's black community. On these occasions the public demonstrations which followed the deaths did not exacerbate into confrontations with the police: therefore, apart from a few newspapers, notably the Guardian and some of the black weeklies and leftwing periodicals, these deaths passed without much mainstream tension.

Following the disturbances, the circumstances of Wayne Douglas's death have almost been forgotten. Eyewitnesses to his arrest allege that no fewer than 17 police officers were seen to be striking, kicking and racially abusing a handcuffed and captive Mr Douglas as they dragged him to a van. Within one hour Wayne Douglas was dead.

Many people are critical of the police for having ordered an autopsy without first establishing contact with Mr Douglas's family. Folk being queer as they are, none of this seems to have been picked up by the tabloids. Indeed, the calls that were forwarded to my desk from reporters on the Star and the Mail came from experienced journalists who claimed they were not even aware that a man had died in a London police station the week before the riots.

This type of attitude has led many members of the black community — and also many white residents of Britain's inner cities — to believe that we live in two different worlds. One white, privileged and middle class, which is understandably outraged at the knifing and callous murder of London headmaster Philip Lawrence but which has almost forgotten the similarly tragic circumstances under which his namesake Stephen Lawrence, an 18-year-old black male, was brutally killed two years ago. On occasion these worlds appear to come into conflict with one another; but it would seem that, rather than using the opportunity to sit around a table and have a reasonable debate, many people attempt to apportion blame to an unspecified "minority".

No one denies that the British constabulary has an increasingly difficult task in protecting and serving the public. What many people believe, however, is that there are police officers who seem less committed than the vast majority of their peers to eradicating crime from our streets rather than pursuing a separate and corrupt agenda.

In the wake of Mr Douglas's death, the most salient points that have arisen involve calls for a new policy for dealing with deaths in police custody. The three main proposals are for the immediate suspension of any police officer in immediate contact with a person who has died in police custody; the institution of an independent public inquiry; and greater efforts towards the establishment of local consultation groups which would increase accountability of police officers to the local communities which they purport to serve.

Sir Paul Condon's response to the reports of the disturbances in Brixton seem to be misguided. Many eyewitnesses who claim that the actions of police officers on duty in the area directly led to the confrontation were *not* disgruntled anarchists; their comments were the observations of law-abiding citizens making their way home from leisure or work-related activities.

The Metropolitan police chief must take on board some of the criticisms that are made in regard to the behaviour of officers in charge. The fingerpointing must stop, and someone in authority needs to be large enough to accept some degree of culpability.

Michael Massive is news editor of the Caribbean Times

Algeria's socialists ponder poll setback

Catherine Simon

THE big losers in the November 16 Algerian presidential election were the modernist parties, in particular Hocine Aït Ahmed's Socialist Forces Front (FFS) which called for a boycott. Now they are wondering whether they will be able "to bounce back in time", as one of their activists said, or are to be condemned to a long exile in the political wilderness.

The fate of those who urged a boycott, the FFS in particular, was sealed by the high voter turnout. This is now giving rise to discussions inside the party. "The empty-chair policy in the end always backfires on those who advocate it," noted an FFS member who disagreed with his party's decision.

Another said: "By not running in the presidential election, FFS general secretary Hocine Aït Ahmed passed up a unique opportunity." In his view, if the FFS had called on the political groups that took part in the January 13 Rome agreement — especially the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) — to support its candidates, it would have "given itself the means to test the sincerity of the Islamists' commitment to democracy and to cut short the FLN's ambiguities".

There is bitterness over what some FFS members see as a "terrible waste". They say things started to go wrong from the moment the Rome agreement was signed. One member claimed that by signing it "we gave the FIS and the FLN a democratic cover. But we failed to go any further. We have given a lot and got nothing in return. When the government rejected the offer of peace, we should have drawn our conclusions from it. Instead of becoming uptight and digging in our heels, we should have opened up, sounded out the government's more 'enlightened' members and, in particular, worked on the modernists."

Did that mean going in with the Culture and Democracy Rally (RCD) of Aït Ahmed's Kabylie rival, Saïd Sadi? "The quarrels of *zaïms* [leaders] don't prevent the rank and file from campaigning together. Anyway, there's not only the RCD and the Kabylies. Labour union members, and women's and young men's associations are also part of the modernist wing."

Unhappy with the line the FFS was taking, several of its officials moved away from it as early as last spring, some of them resigning and others suspending participation in party activities. "At the rate things are going," said one member with a sigh, "the FFS will soon be an empty shell with Aït Ahmed's name writ large over the entrance." The stormy debates at the FFS national council meeting in early November testified to the prevailing mood of unease.

Though they are anxious to resolve the crisis, the party's apprentice dissidents are being careful. Those who speak out do so only on condition that they are not identified. However, even the most scathing critics say that a *putsch* is far from their thoughts. Although they complain about their leaders' far from democratic ways and accuse them of forcing their choices on members, they hope to be able to thrash everything out, but strictly within the party in congress.

Is this whiff of rebellion the beginning of a decline or a sign of greater maturity? The history of the FFS, which was founded 30 years ago, suggests the latter. The discipline that prevails, even among critics, points towards the latter. But if there is to be a resolution, it will be a long and painful process. Recent statements by the party's national secretary for emigration, Farid Aïssani, saying that the November 16 election "reinforces the FFS in its approach", bode ill for a readiness to accept criticism.

Secret service . . . Hooded militiamen reinforce soldiers at an army roadblock in Blida, 20 miles west of Algiers

Algeria's modernist movement, still in its infancy and divided, is having a hard time asserting itself on the national scene. Sadi's low poll — less than 10 per cent of the vote — testifies to the difficulties. At least it will have helped him to put down his marker for the future and will allow the RCD to remain "visible".

There remains the question of voter motivation. A district-by-district analysis of the results shows the vote's regionalist character. "Ethnic" preferences prevailed over "democratic" ones. Those who voted RCD, even in Algiers, were for the most part Kabylies.

It was primarily community solidarity that operated in the Kabylie, the stronghold of the FFS and the cradle of the RCD. The "Arabs" did the same in voting for Liamine Zeroual, who is from Batna in the east, and Mahfoud Nahnah, a native of Blida. But by casting their ballots, they seized this totally new opportunity that allowed them to exercise their civic rights.

"Here in Algeria we're barely starting our apprenticeship in politics," said a veteran political activist. "Tomorrow, perhaps, we'll get round to democracy."

(December 9)

Nine charged in Rwanda genocide case

Jean Hélène
in Arusha, Tanzania

TEN months of investigating the mass killings that took place in Rwanda last year have led to the international court charging nine people with genocide. However, they are only local officials, who were involved in massacres that took place in April 1994 in the Kibuye prefecture. No senior officials of the previous regime are among the accused.

The Kigali authorities have already conveyed their disappointment and, given the slowness of the process, may be wondering whether justice will be done one day.

Announcing the first charges on December 12 at the headquarters of the international court in Arusha, Tanzania, the court clerk, Andronico Adede, pointed out that the names of the defendants and the countries in which they have found asylum would not be revealed, to prevent them from attempting to escape justice by dropping out of sight.

Why was Kibuye chosen from the hundreds of places where Hutu extremists massacred more than 500,000 people — Tutsis and moderate Hutus — between April and July 1994?

According to Richard Goldstone, chief prosecutor of the UN War Crimes Tribunal, it is because "this is the first place where sufficient evidence has been collected to permit framing charges".

Arrest warrants are expected to be sent out within two weeks to the governments of the countries where the eight accused are living. The authorities in these countries will be expected to arrest the accused and extradite them. Under Article 7 of the UN charter, which these nations have signed, UN member countries that allow suspects to enter their territory are expected to carry out the court's injunctions.

If they refuse, the matter will be referred to the Security Council, which could impose penalties. Goldstone estimates that in about six weeks' time the first of the accused could be brought to the Arusha prison, where a special wing has been prepared for them. The trials will not begin until April 1996, when construction of two special courtrooms at the Arusha international conference centre is expected to be completed.

A second round of charges is due to be filed in March against four Rwandans whom the Belgian authorities have arrested and six other suspects identified in Zambia — four of whom have already been arrested. Zambia has arrested a score of Rwandan Hutu refugees, no doubt on information supplied by Kigali, but the international court has not obtained enough evidence to indict more than four of them.

Kigali is disappointed because none of those who "masterminded" the genocide has been accused. Goldstone explained that trying the "henchmen" first was a good way of establishing a link with the organisers at the top. This was how the big war criminals in the former Yugoslavia were tracked down, he said.

(December 14)

France presses Iraq on UN sanctions

Mouna Naïm

ALTHOUGH Iraq's attempts to get the West to ease the oil embargo are once again doomed to failure, Paris continues to press Baghdad to comply with the provisions of the United Nations resolution.

For the first time since 1990, a senior Quai d'Orsay official — Denis Bauchard, director of Middle Eastern affairs — went to Baghdad in mid-November to tell the Iraqi government that strict compliance with the Security Council resolutions was the only way out of the current situation. He told the Iraqis that, contrary to their expectations, amending Resolution 986 — which allows Baghdad to sell oil under certain conditions — was unlikely.

Bauchard also told Iraq that it should start being completely honest with the UN. Iraqi lies were revealed when two of Saddam Hussein's three sons-in-law defected to Jordan on August 8. One of them, General Hussein Kamel Hassan, was in charge of Iraq's military industrialisation.

By sending an official representative to Baghdad, France has taken a considerable risk. It could damage relations with the United States and Britain, both of which will not budge on the question of easing the oil embargo.

Both capitals, informed by Paris of its initiative, have expressed their disapproval. But France has its own ideas on dealing with the Iraqi regime. It is convinced that if President Saddam is to be made to see reason, it must stick to its fundamental objectives.

France believes that the need for dialogue has become more urgent as the humanitarian situation in Iraq has deteriorated. Malnutrition — with food rations sufficient for only 40 per cent of the normal caloric intake — and the reappearance of diseases such as cholera, typhoid and malaria have increased the mortality rate, especially of children, and are exposing some categories of the population to great risk.

Until now Baghdad has regarded Resolution 986 as an infringement of its sovereignty, particularly the two conditions attached to the sale of Iraqi oil. They are, first, that proceeds from the oil would have to be dispensed under close UN supervision. And second, that the Kurdish regions falling outside the Iraqi government's control would receive directly the share of aid allocated to them. This, Baghdad protests, would be tantamount to recognition of a de facto secession of these regions.

What Iraq fears most is that accepting Resolution 986 would indefinitely postpone implementation of Security Council Resolution 627's Article 22, which provides for lifting the oil embargo once Baghdad has complied with the disarmament clauses. Iraq claims that it has fulfilled these conditions.

But Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN special commission in charge of Iraqi disarmament, is still not satisfied. One expert said: "You can bet on the Americans doing everything they can to prevent application of Article 22."

By sending Bauchard to Baghdad, the Quai d'Orsay also wanted to distance itself from the host of French visitors — including prominent politicians and others close to the government — who have been going to Baghdad and whose declarations are likely to cause confusion in the minds of Iraqi leaders, who might think that they are unofficial envoys.

One of the most recent visitors to the Iraqi capital was a former army chief of staff, General Jeannou Lacaze, who went there at the end of November accompanied by three senators (two of them members of the RPR, the senior partner in the ruling coalition). They were received by President Saddam himself.

The France-Iraq Economic Cooperation Association (Afice) — set up in July 1994 and whose chairperson is the RPR deputy for Maine-et-Loire, Roselyne Bachelot — has obtained Baghdad's go-ahead to form "a committee for the constitution of a Franco-Iraqi chamber of commerce and industry".

Gilles Munier, general secretary of Afice, said that the new chamber of commerce would serve as an intermediary for the Franco-Arab Chamber of Commerce until that body was able to resume its work in Iraq.

(December 12)

Clear-eyed portrait of society

Michel Guerrin on an exhibition of the great German photographer, August Sander

IN 1927, when he was at the height of his powers, August Sander wrote a brief profession of faith that was to influence generations of photographers: "If, in all consciousness, I have the presumption to see things as they are and not as they should or might be, pray excuse me, but I cannot do otherwise."

Truth, exactitude and faithfulness were the inalienable qualities that guided the work of one of the greatest photographers and portraitists of all time. Sander (1876-1964) lived through two world wars. He experienced the horrors of the Third Reich, and his first book of photographs was banned by the Nazis.

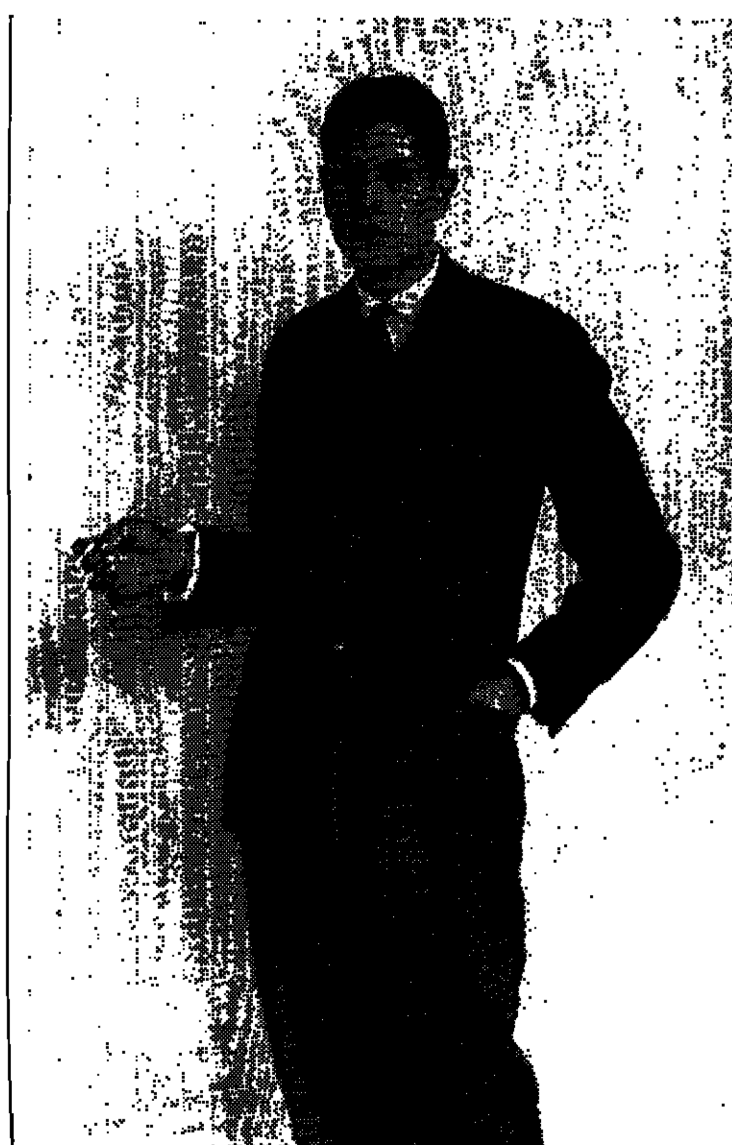
He lived through some of the most decisive developments in the history of photography, from pictorialism to Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity). He accumulated an impressive number of prizes and medals.

From the turn of the century on, Sander pulled off the rare double achievement of being able to earn a living from his photographs and producing work that turned out to be an enduring record of his time.

His portraits were revolutionary in their precision. In them, the sitter — usually male and often described in archetypal terms (peasant, locksmith, pastrycook and so on) — is only one element of the image: equal importance is often placed on anything from the subject's pose, clothes, haircut, job attributes or home to such accessories as a dog on a lead or a cigarette.

That is why Sander has mainly been identified with the large-scale documentary record of Germany on which he embarked at the beginning of the twenties under the ambitious title of People Of The Twentieth Century. What he was trying to do was paint a portrait of mankind through representative portraits of various socio-professional categories.

The pictures he took between 1910 and 1950 are now on show at the Centre National de la Photographie in Paris. This exhibition of originals, which was assembled by the Sander Archives in Cologne, has already been seen in Moscow, Tokyo and Bonn, and will later go on to Brussels.


High-School Boy by August Sander (1926)

Pride of place in the exhibition has naturally been given to Sander's portraits. They include such celebrated pictures as the Bricklayer's Mate, who carries a hodful of bricks on his shoulders, and Young Peasants On Their Way To A Dance, where three farmers in their Sunday best, wearing hats and carrying walking sticks, have paused on a country path to turn and stare at the camera. But there are also landscapes, still lifes, flowers, montages and views of second world war ruins.

The hanging of the exhibition scrupulously follows Sander's own classification and numbering. Proceedings begin with country folk, whom Sander saw as embodying the original matrix out of which the rich spectrum of mankind was to grow, and continue with craftsmen, industrialists, workers, society ladies, doctors, chemists, aristocrats, politicians, painters, servants, political prisoners, the sick, and the dying.

Yet one is left with the feeling that the exhibition has not done justice to Sander. This is above all due to the absence of many of his most famous pictures — of a Cologne notary, a village schoolteacher, gypsies, circus artistes, a fancy-dress ball in Cologne, revolutionaries and portraits of the painters Gottfried Brockmann and Anton Räderscheidt, the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, the wife of the painter Peter Abelen and the communist Erich Mühsam.

Even more disturbing is the fact that Sander's breathtaking series of pictures of beggars, blind children, Nazis and persecuted Jews are also either absent or seriously under-represented.

What is on offer is a disturbingly watered-down sample of the photographer's work. His main aim, which was to show up the contrast between classes, the fractures of society and the impending chaos of the thirties, have been glossed over. What is left is a chocolate-box image of Germany, whereas Sander painted a ruthless portrait of a country in the grip of Nazism.

The exhibition set out to be a comprehensive retrospective, yet drew solely on one source, the Sander Archives. These are controlled by the photographer's heir, who can think of only one thing: how to protect the image of his illustrious forebear.

The organisers of the exhibition had no choice but to co-operate with the archives, which contain 4,000 original prints and 10,770 glass negatives, even though there are numerous remarkable prints — absent from the show — in many museums, such as the Getty Museum, or in private hands.

The hanging is also debatable: it restricts itself to a succession of pictures arranged by theme, when only a chronological presentation could have revealed the true significance of Sander's *oeuvre*, shown how his aesthetic approach evolved, and illustrated the great watershed of the second world war, which resulted in Sander being forced to restrict himself to landscapes.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Sander is his struggle to achieve visual truthfulness, the way he eschewed the affected aestheticism of pictorialism, and the influence of his upbringing, tastes, beliefs and judgments on his attempt to cast a lucid eye on German society.

Sander's caring attitude towards those who had been underprivileged by or excluded from society, his complicity with the intellectual world, his compassion for the disabled, the ferocious way he portrayed the great and the good, and the cruelty of his vision of young Nazis were patently evident in his photographs. That is why they were so loathed by the Third Reich, which censored them.

SANDER the carpenter's son explained why his People Of The Twentieth Century opened with a chapter devoted to country people: "The characters come from Westerwald, where I was born: the human beings I had known since my youth down to their smallest idiosyncrasy seemed to me, because of their very links with the natural environment, the people who could embody my conceptions in an overall study."

Sander was an artist whose influence extended well beyond the field of photography. Contemporary painters conducted a dialogue with him through their works. Well-known photographers such as Diane Arbus and Richard Avedon and the film-maker Wim Wenders cite him as a key influence.

Like the pioneering French photographer Eugène Atget, Sander produced an *oeuvre* that lies at the meeting-point of two worlds, two centuries and two genres — art and document.

(November 17)

August Sander, Centre National de la Photographie, Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild, Paris. Closed Tuesday. Until January 22.
Also now showing in Paris is the exhibition August Sander et Cologne, Goethe Institut, Paris. Closed Saturday and Sunday. Until January 31

Dialogue between different mediums

Philippe Dagen on the parallels between painters and photographers under the Weimar Republic

THE painter Otto Dix said of his own work: "I wanted to show things as they really are." The photographer August Sander defined his aim as follows: "Let me tell the truth honourably about our time and its human beings."

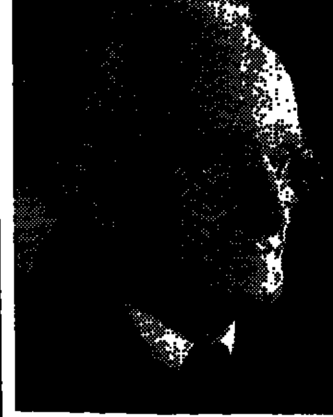
In his clean, neutral style Sander photographed Dix, his wife Martha and their daughter. Dix did not paint Sander's portrait, but his pictures of the twenties and thirties do, like Sander's photographs, offer a complete inventory of contemporary German society.

Both men sought out figures who would embody a profession, a social class or a passion. There are countless parallels between their works. You need only to juxtapose Dix's 1924 portrait of his parents with one of Sander's photographs of elderly peasant couples for the similarities leap to the eye: there is the same frontal composition, the same insistent presence of clothing, the same detailed description of hands and faces.

To achieve this, Dix relied on meticulous pictorial craftsmanship, which he inherited from the German Primitives, and Sander on light effects. Their methods differed, but their purpose was the same, namely Neue Sachlichkeit.

Up to that time, painters and photographers had tended to observe each other at arm's length. The former suffered from both a superiority complex and an anxiety complex, while the latter were envious and ambitious.

Which discipline was going to win the day — photography, with its mechanical and objective images, or painting, with its approximate and subjective images? In the twenties, Neue Sachlichkeit readdressed the question — and solved it simply by rejecting it. As Sander said:


Sander: 'Let me tell the truth honourably about our time'

"Photography has given us possibilities and tasks that are different from those of painting."

Those possibilities include speed of execution, the instant portability of the camera anywhere in town or countryside, and the irrefutable accuracy of the photographic image (as long as it is not touched up).

But when it comes to describing and analysing society, the two approaches are not in competition. On the contrary, they provide each other with mutual support and justification.

Sander the entomologist provided an exhaustive picture of every species of human insect, and embarked on what he called "a subtle hunt" for subjects not only deep in the Rhineland countryside, but in the salons and slums of Cologne. Dix, who adored monstrous subjects, selected the most remarkable examples of them and, through the intensity of his drawing and colour, elevated them to the level of archetype.

The dialogue between the two disciplines as defined by Neue Sachlichkeit extended beyond the parallels between Dix and Sander. Karl Blossfeldt not only photographed plants but studied them with the same manic attention as a botanist. The resulting black-and-white prints are reminiscent of oils by the painter Fritz Burmann.

There are similarities between the photographic work of Hans Finsler and drawings of Rudolf Dischinger or Karl Hubbuch, whose Swimmer In Cologne recalls views of that city taken by Sander from the steel bridge over the Rhine.

As for the portraitists who influenced Sander and Dix, they include, in addition to Max Beckmann of course, George Grosz, Christian Schad, Rudolf Schlichter, Conrad Felixmüller and Anton Räderscheidt.

It so happens that Räderscheidt was one of Sander's favourite models. He posed in Sander's photographs in virtually the same way as he did in his own self-portraits, so it is impossible to tell who influenced whom. But in any case it is probably less relevant to talk of influence than of an interplay of intentional and well-thought-out correspondences.

(November 17)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Cambodia Slides Back Into Violence

Keith B. Richburg in Phnom Penh

A NEWSPAPER editor is gunned down in broad daylight. A grenade is tossed into a Buddhist temple, wounding 50 supporters of the political opposition. Troops and tanks appear in the streets as a show of force against a prominent critic of the government. The ex-Communist co-prime minister orders his newly formed private army to destroy his enemies, whom he likens to "worms."

Cambodia has been widely touted as a success story — a model of global peacemaking in the post-Cold War world. The United Nations spent close to $3 billion trying to break the cycle of tragedy.

But today, two years after U.N.-sponsored elections were supposed to have ushered in a new era of democracy and economic recovery, Cambodia appears to be sliding back to its familiar pattern of political violence, assassination and repression.

During the presence of the massive U.N. mission, the country witnessed a brief flowering of open democracy, with political parties forming, dozens of newspapers appearing on the streets, and new groups launched to monitor human rights.

"The expectation was that Cambodia under the aegis of the United Nations had been cured and was on the road to liberal democracy," one foreign resident said. "But when you step back and look at it, the idea that little Cambodia with all its tragic problems would suddenly become the most democratic country in Asia was totally unrealistic."

The current rulers — led by the former Communists installed during the decade-long Vietnamese occupation — are trying to establish a new dictatorship, according to many Cambodians, human-rights groups and some Western diplomats.

Although the country is largely peaceful, with the Khmer Rouge guerrillas reduced to making small-scale attacks, the government appears bent on silencing all opposition and talks of staying in power until 2010. Critics accuse the international community of unseemly silence, protecting the myth of the Cambodian "success story."


A village militia trains near Phnom Penh. Guns appear to be playing an increasing role in Cambodian politics PHOTOGRAPH: CAROLINE PENN

"Cambodian democracy is in a free fall now," said Lao Mong Hay, director of the Khmer Institute for Democracy. "The countries that co-signed the international agreements are our safety net. Whether democracy will fall through that safety net to the floor and be killed remains to be seen."

Many Cambodians express particular disappointment with the United States, widely seen as a champion of human rights and democracy. But the U.S. Embassy has for the most part remained silent about the mounting, documented cases of abuse of the government's opponents.

"The interest of the U.S. government in Cambodia is not human rights or democracy," said Ahmad Yahya, a Cambodian member of parliament who holds an American passport. "The interest of the U.S. government is stability . . . They don't put pressure on the leadership, because they want to work closely with it and see that the country has stability."

The United States provided about $50 million in aid to Cambodia for the 1995 fiscal year, an embassy spokesman said, including money to rebuild the road to the port at Sihanoukville, support for democratic institutions and $5 million in emergency food aid.

A House-backed proposal to grant Cambodia most-favored-nation trading status is being held up in the Senate, where Sen. William V. Roth, R-Del., has expressed concern over the mounting evidence of human-rights abuse.

Cambodia was not supposed to turn out this way. After two decades of turmoil and bloodshed — the 1970 military coup, the 1975 takeover by the radical Communist Khmer Rouge, the horror of the genocide that followed, then Vietnam's 1978 invasion and decade-long occupation — Cambodia at last seemed ripe for recovery.

The fractious, Western-backed resistance coalition signed a 1991 peace accord in Paris with the Communist regime, and that cleared the way for the dispatch of thousands of U.N. troops to separate the warring parties and organize elections.

That 1991 pact also committed all factions to establish a pluralistic, multi-party democracy that would guarantee human rights. The United States was one of the main players in achieving the agreement.

The elections took place in 1993. Cambodia became a constitutional monarchy, with Norodom Sihanouk returning to the throne he lost in 1970. The political party that Sihanouk created, the royalist Funcinpec led by his son, Norodom Ranariddh, came out ahead of the ex-Communists in the voting.

As far as the world could tell then, Cambodia was a success: The "good guys" won, and the United Nations departed.

And that is when the problems began. Ranariddh agreed to form a coalition government with the ex-Communists, restyled as the Cambodian People's Party, who finished a close second in the balloting.

The two parties agreed to share everything, splitting ministries and naming "co-ministers." At the time, the power-sharing arrangement was seen as a novel recipe for political stability.

But the ex-Communists never really relinquished administrative control, not in the ministries and not at the district and village level.

The People's Party's control is perhaps most pronounced in the police and security units, which have been blamed for most of the attacks on opposition politicians and their supporters, and on journalists.

Priests Teach Youths to Say No to Mafia

Daniel Williams in Palermo

THE Revs. Paolo Turturro and Gino Sachetti, Roman Catholic priests and anti-Mafia crusaders, live lives of dangerous irony. As prison chaplains, they minister to Mafia convicts, try to get them to go straight and occasionally do them small favors, such as carrying messages to relatives and lawyers.

But each man is also a kind of prisoner. Outside jail, they relentlessly urge youths to reject organized crime and the Mafia's hold on impoverished neighborhoods. For this work, they have earned the unforgiving hostility of local crime bosses and therefore must work, walk and travel under armed escort supplied by the Italian army.

"I constantly get threatening messages from the Mafia. Basically, they say I am a walking cadaver," said Turturro, a white-haired priest in the Borgo Vecchio neighborhood of Palermo. "It is hard to get used to."

"I can't even go get a cup of coffee without my escort," said Sachetti, who works in Termini Imerese, a port town 20 miles east of Palermo.

They are two of a handful of priests who are battling Mafia influence in Palermo, the capital of the Cosa Nostra, as organized crime in Sicily is known.

All the activist priests have been threatened with death. The messages are as diverse as a simple letter or a car set on fire. A dozen live under constant military guard. A few others have abandoned Palermo for more tranquil posts on the Italian peninsula.

The role of organized-crime fighter is a new one for the Catholic Church in Sicily. Once it was a passive observer that, like many individual Italians, regarded the Mafia as a folkloric if sometimes dangerous phenomenon somehow rooted in the culture of Sicily.

The growth of the drug trade, ever more violent inter-clan wars, and attacks on police and prosecutors during the past 15 years made the church's passivity intolerable to some priests.

In the early 1990s activists began to meet and discuss ways of liberating neighborhoods from Mafia control. It is an uphill battle. Unemployment in parts of Palermo and Sicily approaches 50 percent. Steady income is a major attraction — even if it comes from crime.

The priests set up small-business and employment agencies. They wrote Pope John Paul II letters urging him to take a stand. He responded in 1993 by calling the Mafia "the work of the devil."

Shortly afterward Sachetti, who operates an anti-drug program, received a message in the form of a bloody lamb's head on his doorstep. A note pinned to it said, "This is how you'll end up."

But not all priests are involved in the battle, and there are whispers that certain bishops, who maintain traditional links to Mafia families and their funding, oppose anti-Mafia activism. Prosecutors are investigating officials in the Palermo diocese of Monreale for Mafia connections.

Baby Boomers' Challenge to the Media

Richard Harwood

CHERYL RUSSELL, writing in American Demographics magazine, alerts us to a forthcoming media extravaganza commencing on January 1, 1996. That is the date on which "the first 7,745 of 78 million baby boomers turn 50." By year's end, 3.4 million will have reached that age, and by the year 2005 baby boomers will represent a majority of the population aged 50 to 74.

We can thus expect, for a variety of reasons, cover stories and introspective essays galore. The boomers already are the most celebrated generation in our history. That is because there are so many of them, because they are a generation "entirely unlike older generations of Americans," Russell writes, "both in attitudes and lifestyles" and because the ringmasters of the media are themselves boomers with a self-conscious and understandable interest in delineating how far they have come and where they are going now.

This is the time in their lives when they are concerned about putting kids through college, the time when a lot of divorces are likely to occur, the time when they are at or nearing the peak of their earning powers, when they are beginning to worry more about their careers and their health, the time to start thinking about retirement and their post-retirement lifestyles. Many of them, alas, will have thoughts of death as they encounter high blood pressure, heart disease and arthritis and watch their parents and growing numbers of their contemporaries pass on to the great beyond.

They are the first generation to have grown up with television, and have become the most affluent and educated cohort of Americans in history. As they reach these milestones of middle age, the newspapers have a particular interest in them as customers. We are holding our breath in the hope that with the graying of this generation they and their children will find that newspapers are as relevant to their lives as older generations had done. We worry, too, that the "negativism" and "tabloidism" of the press have turned them off.

People with the most money and education buy the most newspapers. The boomers rank high on both counts and buy more newspapers than other age groups. But measured in terms of household penetration, the numbers are not encouraging. Thirty years ago, more than 80 percent of Americans 35 to 54 read a paper on a weekday; the percentage today is 65 percent.

"The attitudes of the boomers — shaped, many believe, by the media — may have something to do with this. They are the first generation of the "post-industrial" era, an era in which many of the old certitudes of American life have been shaken by social and economic upheavals, including a loss of status and economic position by the middle class and by corrosive racial and gender divisiveness. This seems to have produced among the boomers widespread cynicism and distrust toward almost all of the institutions of our society, the media included.

However, they retain a good deal of the idealism and optimism of earlier days. This is especially true of journalists in the national media. Their work may not always show it, but a majority, according to a Times-Mirror pollsters report published this year, believe that public officials in Washington, corporate executives, clergymen and military leaders are basically honest and ethical people. Their instincts are far less negative than the public would have it and far less negative than the populace at large.

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Computer Hackers Target the Web

Elizabeth Corcoran

COMPUTER hackers are turning their unwelcome attentions to the World Wide Web, the fast-expanding branch of the Internet where individuals and organizations make electronic words, pictures and sounds available to people all over the global network.

Web "sites" are among the easiest places on the Internet to disrupt and sabotage, experts say, in part because many people who set up such displays pay little attention to security. Even more problematic is that one of the catchiest features of the Web actually makes security breaches easier: some Web sites encourage people to electronically "chat" with others using the site or to send them messages and comments. That can leave the site open to digital interlopers in the same way a homeowner who leaves open a basement window for the cat is vulnerable.

Although no one likes to admit being hit by cyber-sabotage, a few incidents have surfaced:

❑ A day or two after the Million Man March in Washington, the Web site of the Nation of Islam was altered. The intruders rewrote text on the site, peppering it with racist messages.

❑ MGM-United Artists' Web site advertising the movie Hackers was hacked. A couple of weeks before the film's debut, digital vandals left spray-paint-like graffiti on images stored at the site, along with a few choice words.

❑ Computer News Daily, a Web site sponsored by the New York Times Syndicate that features articles from more than a dozen publications, was receiving 60,000 "hits," or visits from several thousand people a day. In mid-August people trying to fetch articles from the site found it had become frustratingly slow. Someone had gummed up the site by bombarding it with endless streams of irrelevant messages.

The World Wide Web is a network of linked computers. On them, individuals post colorful personalized material — photographs, stories, favorite sayings are common — that web users all over the world can call up onto their screens. Companies and organizations place material about products or purposes.

Individuals typically pay an online service company to maintain the material for them on their computers, where it exists as magnetic impulses stored electronically, awaiting a command from a distant computer to send it for viewing.

There are no sure-fire ways to ensure safety, experts caution. But people setting up Web sites should familiarize themselves with basic computer security measures. They should ask the service company that maintains the Web site its safeguards against intruders. Those who develop a Web site should keep a close eye on it for unwanted intrusions.

But for now, "web sites are generally less protected than other parts of the Internet," said Peter Tippett, president of the National Computer Security Association, a consulting firm in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

More experienced Internet users might recognize that any computer that hooks into the Internet can leave itself open to cyber-sabotage. Those with interactive features such as e-mail or chat are more at risk.

But there isn't a lot of discussion of sabotage. Some people believe the sites are so easy to break into they present little challenge for computer hackers seeking a thrill. Others say no one wants to admit their site was invaded. "The incidents have to be handled delicately because once there's blood in the water, it excites the sharks," said Richard Power, a senior analyst with Computer Security Institute, a San Francisco think-tank.

Confucius Says: Go East, Young Man

Many Asians now think their values are better than 'the American way', writes **T. R. Reid**

THE ASIAN leaders gathered in Osaka last month for the annual Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit expressed pious regrets that Bill Clinton had to cancel his attendance at the last minute.

At some level, though, they were probably delighted. The image of a US president trapped in Washington by political chaos surrounding a red-ink budget can only strengthen the Asians growing superiority complex toward the once-revered USA. Many Asian politicians, scholars and business leaders are proudly proclaiming these days that there is an ocean of difference in basic social values across the Pacific. They have decided that the Western, democratic, Judeo-Christian value structure, with its emphasis on the primacy of the individual — in short, "The American Way" — is fundamentally different from the Eastern, group-oriented, vaguely Confucian cultural pattern that is now proudly labeled "The Asian Way." And it's not just that the values are different. Rather, these Asian Neo-Confucianists insist that their cultural values are better than ours.

"Many Western societies — including the United States — are doing some major things fundamentally wrong today, while a great number of East Asian societies are doing the same things right," argues Kishore Mahbubani, a Singaporean scholar and diplomat who has emerged as the Max Weber of this new "Confucian Ethic." In an endless series of articles and lectures bearing titles like "The Dangers of Decadence" and "Go East, Young Man", the engaging and articulate Mahbubani tells his fellow Asians that "the American boat is sinking" and that a strong dose of Confucian values is needed to set things right. "If Americans were to try to begin learning from Asians, their nation would become a better place." Even in Japan, most Westernized of the Asian nations, there is a movement to turn back East. "By following the insights of Confucianism," insists the Japanese academician Kichitaro Katsuta, "we can avoid the social catastrophe befalling the West, the result of centuries of individualism and egotism." Americans, still patting themselves on the back for winning the Cold War, may not be ready just yet for another global ideological struggle over first principles. But an increasingly wealthy and confident East Asia is eager to engage us in a debate that raises direct challenges to cherished Western ideals.

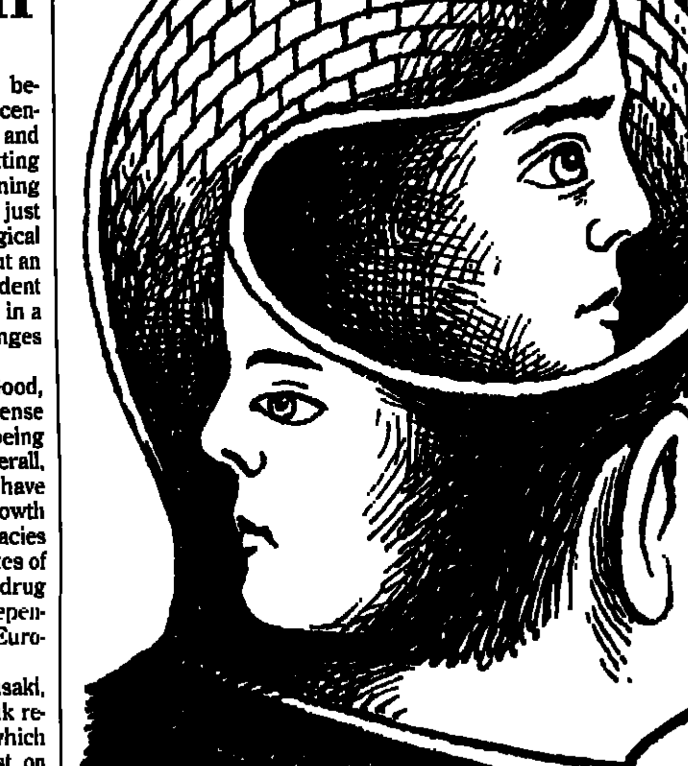
Fueling the notion of "Asia Good, America Bad" is the palpable sense of social and economic well-being sweeping over East Asia. Overall, the Asian members of APEC have much higher economic growth rates than the Western democracies — coupled with much lower rates of unemployment, violent crime, drug use, broken homes, welfare dependency and other detritus of Euro-American society.

From Kuala Lumpur to Kawasaki, people cite the 1994 World Bank report that sought to predict which countries would be the richest on earth a quarter-century from now. In that ranking, four of the five wealthiest nations, and seven of the top 10, are Asian. The United States, the world's richest nation today, is projected in second place in the year 2020, between China and Japan.

Economic statistics can go up and down, of course — just ask Japan, yesterday's Asian Superman, now wallowing in extended recession. But Asia's current crop of Neo-Confucians look more at social indicators than economic statistics.

"You Americans have this mantra about your high standard of living," Mahbubani told me once, soft-spoken and amiable even as he plunged the rhetorical dagger. "And yes, if standard of living means the number of square feet in your home, or the number of channels on your TV, America leads the world. But if standard of living means not being afraid to go outside that home after dark, or not worrying about what filth your children will see on all those TV channels, then our Asian societies have the higher standard." That gets to the core of the Neo-Confucian case against Western democracy.

The free nations of Europe and America are simply too free, the argument runs; they have gone too far to indulge individual freedom at the expense of society as a whole. When Asian leaders talk about American democracy, the names that come up are not Washington or Jefferson, but rather Tonya Harding, Howard Stern, the Menendez brothers and the Michigan Militia.



Naturally, the Neo-Confucianists are encouraged to see Americans agreeing with them on some points. When Mahathir complains that "Abolition of religious instruction in (public) schools has resulted in a loss of direction," he is singing a chorus right out of Pat Robertson"s hymn book.

One of the nicer ironies of the Neo-Confucian boom is that this whole "Pan-Asian" movement borrows its most basic concept from Western thought.

The very existence of a "Far East", a place called "Asia", is a modern Western invention, dreamed up by European geographers and traders.

If the geography underpinning the Neo-Confucian boom is a tad ambiguous, the same can be said for the basic philosophy. As with the ancient prophets of other cultures, Confucius and his ideas are open to a wide range of interpretations.

The great sage K'ung Fu-tzu (that Latinate name "Confucius" is another Western concoction) was appalled by the vice and corruption all about him in Chou dynasty China of the 5th Century BC He taught that the remedy for broad social ills lay in individual dedication to basic virtues.

The Confucian virtues, as they are generally described nowadays, include thrift, hard work, honoring the family unit and obeying the law. There is also a deep commitment to education, to pass along these virtues and other necessary skills.

At at least two points in the Confucian canon, the master declares that the most important single guide to life can be found in the term *shu*. Confucius defines it this way: "Do not impose on others what you do not want done to yourself." To any veteran of Sunday school, of course, this is simply The Golden Rule.

In their contempt for Western ways, however, the Neo-Confucianists insist that the teachings of their ancient Chinese ancestor involve a unique set of values. Even that Confucian statement of The Golden Rule is "different in a subtle way," argues Katsuta, the Japanese academician. The Confucian Golden Rule is stated in the negative, he notes. "Confucius thus advocated tolerance," Katsuta maintains. "The Christian rule encourages well-intentioned activism. But sometimes well-meaning people are importunate and self-righteous . . . Western individualism leads to a clash of egos that will destroy tolerance." Katsuta has Westerners in mind when he denounces intolerance and self-righteousness. In fact, though, the world capital of self-righteousness at the moment may well be the tidy, industrious and thoroughly intolerant city-state of Singapore, a place tightly controlled by Lee Kuan Yew's personal clique of self-styled Neo-Confucians.

Lee charges that Americans "have abandoned an ethical basis for society" — and he's not about to let the same thing happen on his island. Thus police keep watch from the rooftops of Singapore to catch people committing such crimes as littering or chewing gum. Parents of school children deemed to be overweight receive letters ordering them to change the family menus. The government tells people how much of their money to save.

If this is The Asian Way, most people would probably be happy to do without it. But many Neo-Confucianists say Lee's Singapore is a gross perversion of the sage's teaching. These critics say that autocrats like Lee and Malaysia's Mahathir have appropriated Confucius as a high-minded rationale for maintaining personal power.

Confucianism need not necessarily involve the spic-and-span authoritarianism of Singapore. South Korea, a bulwark of Confucian learning to this day, is a noisy, dirty, rambunctious nation where people not only chew gum on the streets but do many more offensive things there as well. But Koreans furiously deny that they are less Asian than Lee Kuan Yew.

"Lee's view of Asian culture is not only unsupportable but also self-serving," charges Kim Dae Jung, the veteran South Korean politician who risked his life repeatedly opposing military dictators in his own country.

Kim insists that dissent and democracy are cherished Confucian ideals, and that the master's teaching was a key element in South Korea's dramatic switch to democracy in 1987. In short, proponents of The Asian Way are hazy about which direction their Way is headed. In Asia, though, the most important point is that it is not The American Way. The Neo-Confucianists are convinced that their cultural pattern is preferable, and they want to whole world to know it.

"For the past several hundred years, the world has been dominated by Greek and Judeo-Christian ideas," Kim Dae Jung wrote recently. "Now it is time for the world to turn to Asia for another revolution in ideas."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Reflecting on the Final Days of Emmett Till

John Milton Wesley writes on the legacy of a lynching that took place in a little Mississippi town

THE BUILDING still stands at the intersection of Weber Street and Highway 49W in Ruleville, Mississippi. The gas pumps are gone, and so is the red kerosene tank from which we pumped a quarter's worth of "coal oil" for wood stoves, barbecue pits and lamps. The old occupants are gone, too, along with any sign of how, 40 years ago, they damaged the psyche of every young African American male in the nation.

The current residents of what was once Michelle's Grocery are African American. That would not be so surprising, were it not for the tenants who once lived above the store. The Michelles treated African Americans with respect and fairness. Their children played with us. During the early 1950s we shared birthday parties and make-believe swims in shallow plastic pools in the store's backyard. All the while Mrs. Michelle cranked out home made ice cream, popped popcorn and kept an eye out for bad guys who might suddenly come upon children of different colors innocently enjoying being children.

After old man Jack Michelle died, the store changed hands. To us, the children of that sleepy town north of Jackson, it was the closing of a safe port in a sea of bigotry, racism, apartheid, segregation and cotton. For nothing had prepared us for the characters who would somehow come to life in our midst.

The new owners were J. W. Milam and his half-brother, Roy Bryant. Milam had admitted that he and Roy had lynched Emmett Till, the 14-year-old black youth from Chicago who was accused of whistling at a white female.

Only a few of us had ever seen Emmett Till. He was one of those kids who came from "up North" every summer to join us in the cotton fields. Not because they had to, or needed the money, or the grass sacks filled with government-issue cheese, powdered milk, meal and flour, but because they needed a break from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

Emmett stood out among the Chicago boys because he talked continuously, seemed mature for his age, wore a straw hat, had funny-looking, light-colored eyes and all the girls thought he was cute. Like other black boys who came from up North he could keep us spellbound with stories of white girlfriends, the forbidden fruit. After all, they were our masters because they were white, regardless of their ages. Even our parents and grandparents called white children mister and miss. It was custom. In our minds, the thought of referring to a white kid in Mississippi as a girlfriend or boyfriend could mark a black child or his family for retaliation from the Ku Klux Klan, or from anyone who was white and aware of the thought, comment or rumor.

Yet we were always intrigued by wallet-size photographs from Life or Look magazine that the Chicago boys carried in cheap plastic wallets. We believed they were real photos of girlfriends, and that up North you could have a white girlfriend and it was okay. We imagined racial bliss, and integrated movies where blacks didn't have to sit in the balcony. We imagined dancing to Little Anthony and the Imperials singing "Shimmy, Shimmy Coco Bop," and slow dragging to Smokey Robinson and the Miracles crooning "You Really Got a Hold On Me." We believed that up North there was no color line. We believed that blacks only had to stay in their place in the South, in Mississippi. After all, we had our stories too. Our stories were of people who left the fields on Friday and disappeared without a trace by Monday morning. Somehow we knew that if they didn't show up in jail, they would surface in Chicago. We also knew they would return one day talking "proper," the men with "processed" hairdos, loud-colored suits and pointed-toed shoes. If they made it real big, they would be driving a Cadillac. Such was the mystique of the flight north; the myth of the black exodus to the promised land.

To us, Chicago boys like Emmett Till relished their ability to dazzle us with their lack of fear of white people. It never occurred to us at the time that they always made these boasts when there were no white folks around to challenge them. We could only marvel at what we imagined their lives must be like in a place where your seat on the bus was determined not by the color of your skin but by the availability of a vacant seat. To the children of the Mississippi Delta, Emmett Till was Marco Polo, who had gone to the New World and returned this summer to let us know what to expect.

Chicago boys relished their ability to dazzle us with their lack of fear of white people

But in August 1955 things would change forever, and this Marco Polo would never return alive, and no black boy would ever think of his world the same way again.

We had heard rumors of black men being beaten and even lynched for reasons most people would think absurd. Still, we were beguiled by stories of black boys with white girlfriends. Real or imagined, the notion of a white female speaking intimately to a black man or encouraging him to touch her was a fantasy. The more stories we heard from Chicago boys, the more we believed that maybe we were reading the signals wrong. Perhaps white females really did want to be with us intimately. Perhaps all girls were the same, regardless of color. Maybe if we acted a little less scared we too could have white girlfriends and earn bragging rights. Never mind the admonition always present in our minds, that in Mississippi such an offense was punishable by death.

We had no idea that on August 28, 1955, Emmett Till would come face to face with this horrible truth.

It all began at a general store in Money, a one-horse town not far from the Tallahatchie River. This general store was frequented by bus loads of cotton choppers and pickers. We went there for lunch at noon time to buy pork 'n' beans, sardines, cinnamon rolls and RC colas. Often we stopped there on the trip home from the fields in the evenings. It was a place of alcohol, tobacco, gossip, rumors and pathos.

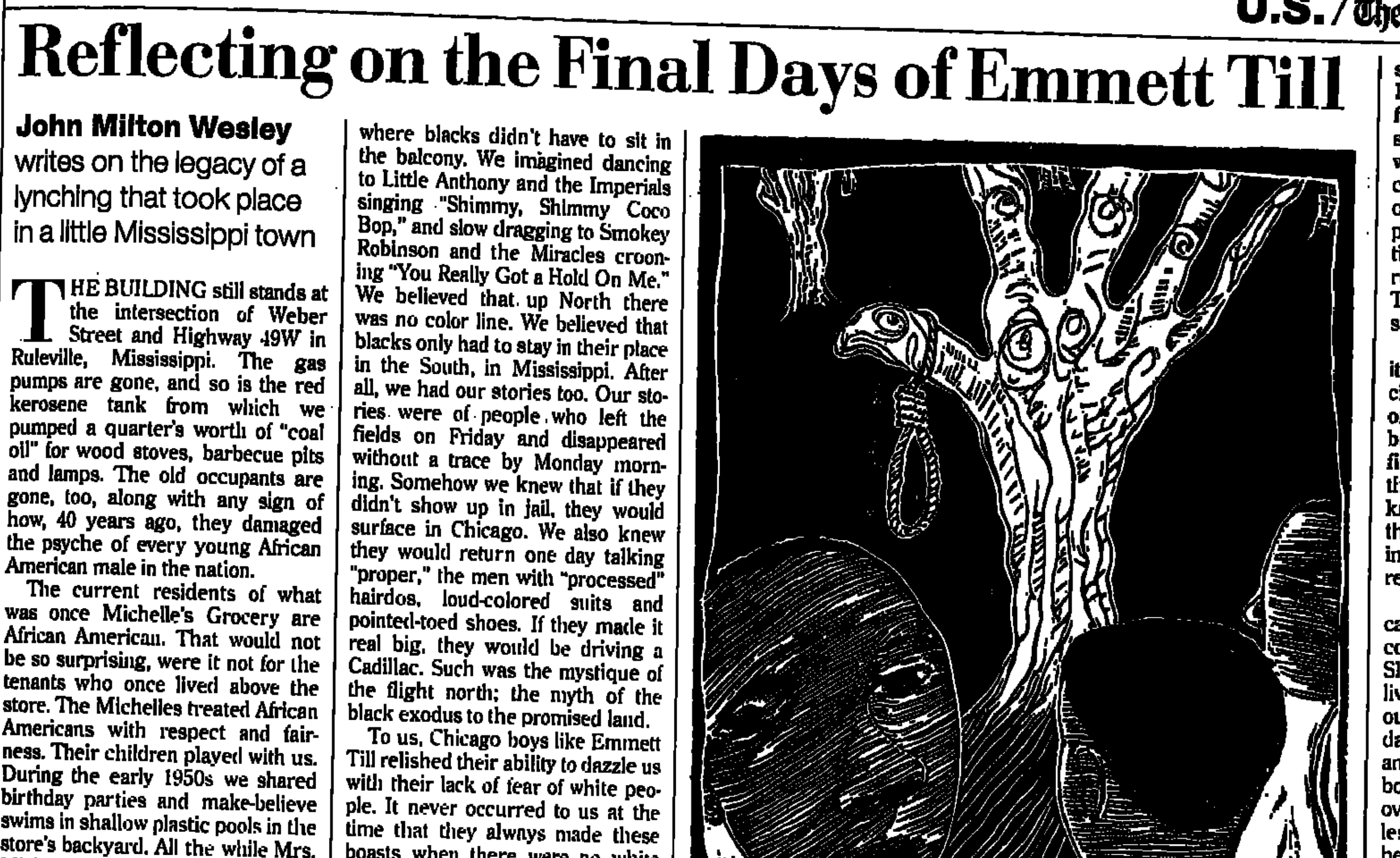


ILLUSTRATION: FRANCES JETTER

On this particular weekend, rumors were afoot that Emmett Till had entered the store on a dare from some of his young friends and begun a conversation with Roy Bryant's wife, who was behind the counter. While his friends peeped in from the outside, Emmett talked freely with the woman. Though it was never proven, one account has it that he "wolf-whistled" and inadvertently touched her in a "non-sexual" way. At this point Emmett's friends became frightened and warned him that they should all run away.

As rumors of the incident spread, Emmett began to share his friends' concern. He talked of cutting short his stay and returning to Chicago. His aunt felt the incident would blow over if he kept quiet and out of sight.

Sometime in the wee morning hours of the following Sunday, two white men went to the home of Emmett's aunt and uncle and took Emmett.

When Emmett's savagely beaten and decomposing body was found eight days later, he had been bound with barbed wire, shot in the head and thrown or rolled into the Tallahatchie River, weighed down by a 74-pound fan used to draw hot air out of a cotton gin.

Immediately, Milam and Bryant were suspects, at least in our minds.

Reluctantly — these were, of course, "upstanding" white citizens of our community — they were arrested by local authorities. They admitted abducting and beating Emmett but said they did not kill him. Five white lawyers volunteered to represent the brothers, and an all-white jury acquitted them.

Later, in a paid interview with the novelist and journalist William Bradford Huie, Milam acknowledged the murder. "The killing was justified," he said in the Look article. "Well, what else could we do? He [Emmett] was hopeless.

"I'm no bully; I never hurt a nigger in my life. I like niggers — in their place. I know how to work them. But I just decided it was time a few people got put on notice.

"As long as I live and can do anything about it, niggers are gonna stay in their place. Niggers ain't gonna vote where I live. If they did, they'd control the government. They ain't gonna go to school with my kids. And when a nigger even gets close to mentioning sex with a white woman, he's tired of living. I'm likely to kill him . . . I stood there and listened to that nigger throw that poison at me, and I just made up my mind. 'Chicago boy,' I said, 'I'm tired of them sending your kind down here to stir up trouble. Goddamn you, I'm going to make an example out of you — just so everybody can know how me and my folks stand.'"

By the time this article appeared in 1956, I was 8 years old. I was well aware of how J. W. Milam and his folks stood. In their minds they lived in a society in which blacks were believed to be genetically inferior to whites.

The notion of a white woman speaking intimately to a black man was a fantasy

Theirs was a climate widely accepted by most segments of the white community, and now even sanctioned by law, or so it seemed to us. The court verdict was not what made this so evident at the time. It was the presence of the local police, state police, sheriffs, deputies and constables who joined the Milams' weekend beer crowd on Saturdays at the store some 200 yards from our front door. By now the corner of Weber Street and 49W had become a gathering place for bigots.

Often when word reached the store of an escape from the State Penitentiary at Parchman, the penal farm a few miles to the north, an instant posse was formed. Without warning, dozens of armed, intoxicated white men would set out, often stopping home long enough to pick up their bloodhounds. Many times, when the hunt was over, they returned to the store in a caravan. They often signaled their arrival and success by firing into the air.

If the death of a peer brings with it a sudden sense of mortality, especially to a child, then the presence of the killers in our midst as neighbors and free men not only confirmed the obvious, but bordered on the absurd. Only the children really knew the impact of the arrival of this family on the deepest of levels, in those places which once changed remain forever changed.

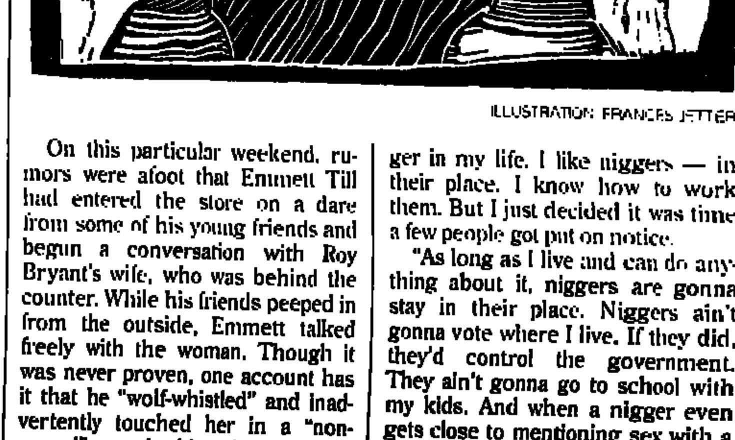
Soon the parties at the store became a little rowdier, and were not confined to weekends. Soon the Shoemakers, a white family who lived on county property adjacent to our small plot of land, forbid their daughter Angie to play with me, or any of the black kids in the neighborhood. She could no longer come over to our house to practice her lessons on our piano, even though her family did not own one. Angie's father, who drove a bulldozer for the county road department, came home one afternoon and proceeded to bulldoze a makeshift playhouse he had constructed for us earlier. Her mother later explained that the family had been warned that Angie and I should no longer be allowed to play together.

The psychological impact served only to further confuse and lower our self-esteem and deepen the age-old notion of white supremacy. It already seemed odd to us that when we were in the fields chopping and picking cotton, white children were home playing or involved in some organized community activity to which we had no access. To us, if black and white children could no longer play together, not because of something we had done but because of some inherent dark stain on our soul only visible to whites, then just maybe to be white was better.

It was now obvious that to survive the physical threat of white supremacy, one had to consciously avoid certain types of environments and people. We knew — though there were no words in our young vocabularies to express the thought — that the more sinister threat was the possibility that we would come to believe that we, as African Americans, were inferior to whites simply because of our color.

In the days that followed, my life and that of my friends changed, and so did our community. We mapped out routes to town which took us away from and around the store. We were warned not to act like we really knew who the brothers were, or what they had been accused of. We were warned not to whistle in public. We were warned not to look at white women at all, and to speak with them only when spoken to and when absolutely necessary. We were warned not to look white men in the eye. We were told there would be no more birthday parties in the backyard of Michelle's Grocery. We were told to keep our oatmeal cookies to ourselves. By then it didn't matter. For us the age of innocence was already dead.

John Milton Wesley, a poet and author, is director of partnership development and marketing for the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information in Rockville.



The bog standard

Geoffrey Gibbs on an eco-friendly invention attracting customers from as far away as China

THE PHONE rings in the cramped shed Dick Barton uses for an office in the Devon village of Harbertonford. The National Trust in Northern Ireland wants to buy one of his products for a riverbank cottage they are renovating.

The Waterless Electronic Biological (WEB) toilet, which uses powdered coconut shell as a starter compost, has already excited interest from potential customers as diverse as the Greyhound bus company and the authorities of a desert city in China.

Getting the WEB to the production stage is the tricky bit. "The trouble with any simple, good invention is that nobody wants to know," says Mr Barton's business partner, Peter Goodwin.

Mr Goodwin, a former regional director of Nissan UK, the motor distribution company, says the venture needs around £250,000 start-up finance. But, he insists, they will only go ahead with the right sort of backer. Venture capital firms have been ruled out as too expensive.

Four unidentified local investors are said to be waiting in the wings to inject funds into the new limited company that will be set up to market the WEB. They are poring over a business plan that Mr Barton and Mr Goodwin had vetted by accountants Grant Thornton.

Coconut shells are the key to Dick Barton's toilet PHOTOGRAPH: MARC HILL

Mr Barton is hoping to market the product — a patented modification of an established Swedish system — for installation in buildings with drainage problems or where elderly or infirm people may need a long-term commode.

He sees big potential in export markets where water is a scarce commodity and claims to have had expressions of interest from the Middle East and Africa. He has particularly high hopes of being able to supply Tia Yuan, a Chinese city of 2.7 million inhabitants in Shanxi province, with the help of a subsidiary of Yorkshire Water.

Production will be contracted out to a Cornish company boasting specialist skills in rotary moulding. For the time being, Mr Barton is meeting demand by modifying stock acquired from a Plymouth manufacturer that is no longer trading.

The unit, essentially a self-contained sewage system, does not require a water supply or any chemicals and is said to be odour-free. What it does need is an electrical supply — mains or generator — and a standard rainwater pipe for ventilation. A low-voltage model for boats and coaches is being developed.

The concept is simple. The toilet is charged with an absorbent starter compost — in this case coconut shell — which is rotated mechanically. A built-in fan provides through ventilation to eliminate odours and the compost is heated to evaporate moisture which is removed outside by the ventilation system.

The heat treatment kills noxious micro-organisms before the used compost is emptied mechanically into a bag for disposal or use as a nutrient in horticulture.

"Four adults using the WEB would need to recharge it about every three weeks," says Mr Barton. The ground coconut shell will come from Sri Lanka. "There's mounds of it there," he said.

For more information, contact: Barton Accessories, Morleigh Road, Harbertonford, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7TS. Tel: +44 1803 732878

A Country Diary

John Vallins

SOMERSET: The first time this winter that I felt a really keen edge to the wind was some days before the snow came. I was on a steep little hillside going to visit a flock of Shetland sheep, rare in these parts. They used to be employed by the local authority as low maintenance mowers, but are now cherished by a private owner. These are "primitive" sheep, not delicate cross-breeds. They are nimble and light-boned, equipped for an independent life in rugged conditions. They lamb easily and produce a lot of milk. Even the windiest hill in Somerset is a mild haven for them. Their Norse origin is evident in their names. Though all are born almost black, the "Kat Moget" develops a striped face like a badger's, the adult "Moorit" has a red-brown coat and darker legs, and the "Gul Moget" a delicate, pale fawn belly. Each is very much an individual in character as well as appearance. When the owner approaches, the sheep crowd towards her. They seemed keen to demonstrate their enjoyment of a recreational stampede, leaping high in the air, apparently out of sheer exuberance. They are friendly creatures, but the young rams with their curled horns are not encouraged to develop overmuch their friendliness with human beings. The breed makes particularly fine mutton, with no marbling of fat below an outer layer designed to see the animal through a hard, Shetland winter.

CLASSIFIED

Shoots of recovery for African farmers

Genetic engineering and chemical killers could boost Africa's crop yield, reports **Tim Radford**

PROFESSOR Jonathan Gressel is an Israeli scientist who hopes to weed out hunger and despair in Africa. He argues that the appliance of science to the problem of just two related parasitic weeds could result in a fourfold increase in crop yields.

The problem, he says, is that agricultural yields in Africa have fallen dramatically since post-colonial times partly through something as unobtrusive as a little plant called witchweed, or *Striga*, and a cousin in Mediterranean Africa called broomrape, or *Orobanche*. They are smart little customers, he says. The seeds hang around in the soil waiting for a host and then sprout. A host can be almost anything grown for food: not plantains, not cassava, but otherwise almost anything — maize, millet, wheat, sorghum, sunflowers, legumes. The parasite attaches itself to the roots of the host and plugs into the vascular system, and send a message to whatever control system the plants have: "You have a potato down here, or a carrot, send lots of sugars down here because I am hungry," says Gressel. Witchweed can do a little bit of photosynthesis for itself, broomrape doesn't even bother with that. Both of them prefer to make the host do the work, and feed the parasite with water, sugars and photosynthetic goods. Then it sends up a little stock covered with flowers. One, just one, of these stocks can produce 100,000 seeds.

As weeds go, it is pretty good at replenishing itself. Broomrape reduced the Egyptian broad bean crop by 30 per cent in a decade. A survey of 180,000 square kilometres of Nigeria found witchweed seeds in ... per cent of the fields. In seven ...es of sub-Saharan Africa, everywhere except mountains and ...sts, witchweed was the biggest pest: bigger than fungi, more voracious than locusts. In one little part of western Kenya, witchweed costs the farmers 81,000 tons of corn a year, valued at $10 million.

"It looks very pretty. At the soil level you see these beautiful expanses of flowers. If you look above, you see things kind of dried out and dying," Gressel says. There isn't a lot of point in weeding. By the time the flowers appear, the crop has had it. "We are talking about a 50 per cent or more yield reduction after it gets going. We are talking about the human problem of losing half your crop. We are talking about when it gets worse than that: when you just abandon the crop, so you have lost the ground as well, and you have to move into the nearest nature reserve because it is the only land available. So one would hope the Greens would support solutions for this but they don't seem too supportive."

Traditional cross-breeding or hybridising has done nothing for the problem. A few years ago, Gressel formed a hypothesis and began pestering industry with it. Industry — big corporate multinational industry — wasn't very interested, because you cannot sell cures to people who haven't the income to pay for them. But Gressel argued that what is about to happen for cash-crop cotton in agribusiness. America also goes for subsistence maize in Kenya or Zambia: it would pay a farmer to buy genetically engineered seeds with a specific herbicide resistance built in, and then wipe out the weeds with a herbicide.

He got hold of some suitable biotechnologically manipulated seed, and soaked it with herbicide, and with help from other scientists, and the US Agency for International Development, planted it in selected plots in Kenya and Tanzania. So far the experimental crop is alive and doing well. Its untreated cousin in the next plot is just dried out stalks, he reports.

"What we are talking about in Africa is not just doubling the yields. We are talking about more than that. The witchweed was halving the yield, so the farmers stopped using fertiliser because they couldn't afford to share it with a parasite. In colonial times they were getting about four tons per hectare of maize. Now they are getting about one ton. Let us take the worst possible calculations," he says.



On bare ground . . . women and children plough an African field PHOTOGRAPH: RON GILING

"The seed will cost $20 a hectare; the herbicide will cost about $5. Clearly if it were to cost about $50 — if he had to spray the whole field — the farmer couldn't use it. So he gets another ton, which is worth $120. Now fertiliser does cost about $50 a hectare. But now he can double the yield again: he has no witchweed to share the fertiliser with, so he can afford those $50 to get another $240 worth of crop. Once he has got his own seed and the treatment is costing him only $5 he will start thinking about fertiliser doubling again. We are talking about huge changes."

It's a neat trick: resolve local hunger, sustain rural independence, maintain the land, give people a stake in it and reduce the migration to the shantytowns at the edge of the cities — everybody wins. Except, of course, the chemical companies? Wrong, he says. A farmer in Nigeria or Kenya is certainly not going to spend $50 a hectare on magic formulae from the megacorporations. But he is going to spend $5 a hectare. Nigeria — to name but one nation — has 70 million hectares under crops. Multiply that by $5 and you have a nice little earner.

There are catches. One of them is mutation. Weeds are weeds because they are successful: throw something at them and they fight back. Take the English lawn, he says. Dandelions have evolved to flourish lower and lower under a mowing regime. In India, nature evolved a tall, highly competitive wheat that outsoared its weed competitors and survived by producing only a small ear. So the green revolution took that wheat and turned it into a dwarf with big ears, so that all the photosynthesis went into making food for the hungry, rather than strength to outpace weeds. The short one responded very nicely to fertiliser too, whereas the tall one just fell over when you tried to feed it. For a while, things were fine. The only thing left to contend with was a tough little stalk called *Phalaris minor*, or canary grass, and a cheap herbicide took care of that. Sustainable agriculture, in India, came to mean something it doesn't mean in the West. It came to mean sustaining a continuous yield increase in order to sustain unstoppable population growth.

But the green revolution — the one that depended on hybrids rather than genetic engineering, on fertilisers and chemicals rather than neat tricks — is running out of steam. Weeds, however, don't give up. In parts of the Punjab, where canny Sikh farmers led the way to modernity, the canary grass is back, mile upon mile of it.

Broomrape and witchweed will go on posing problems. Farmers have been battling with weeds since the birth of agriculture more than 5,000 years ago. Science will have to go on providing more resistant genes. But the Darwinian facts remain: random mutation and natural selection by herbicide will produce survivors. Gressel can do the mathematics. The mutation frequency is one in a million. Each stock puts out 1,000 seeds.

"We calculate in the first year alone there will be five stocks per hectare of resistance. Mathematical modelling shows that in three years, witchweed will be on the way back — unless the missionaries get there first and show that cleanliness is next to godliness and get the farmer to go out and knock off those five stocks before they set seed. We are talking about subsistence farming," he says. "It's not too much to ask."

Developed world takes the pledge

A key treaty on CFCs came of age this month, writes **Duncan Brack**

INTERNATIONAL systems live precariously, wrote Henry Kissinger. "Never before have the components of world order, their capacity to interact, and their goals all changed quite so rapidly, so deeply or so globally." One of these components is the evolving network of international environmental treaties. Now numbering over 170, they deal with a wide range of issues, from global warming to the protection of endangered species to trade in hazardous wastes. Growing in scope and significance, these agreements form a vital part of next century's world order.

This month in Vienna, one of the most important came of age. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, signed in 1987, attempted what many believed impossible: to place controls on production and consumption of the widely-used range of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. Highly versatile, and profitable, CFCs turned out to destroy the stratospheric ozone layer, which shields the earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation.

The negotiators succeeded beyond their hopes. Under the spur of the limited targets of the initial agreement, industry developed alternatives that were not only as good as CFCs but often cheaper. Following two major amendments to the treaty, CFC production and consumption will cease everywhere in the developed world at the end of 1995. Other chemicals not even thought of as ozone depleters a decade ago have been brought under control. If the treaty's provisions are fully implemented, the ozone layer should start to recover about the turn of the century, and be restored to health in another 50 years.

Action to tackle global environmental degradation has been in general confined to environment ministries and agencies, with industry, trade, agriculture, development and finance departments playing varied, sometimes negative, roles. Vienna showed the real need for environmental sustainability to be integrated into the operations, assumptions and values of every public agency. Just what governments signed up to, in fact, at the 1992 Earth Summit.

If treaties are to be effective, they must be fully implemented. The Montreal Protocol is now faced with its first cases of non-compliance: five eastern European and former Soviet "transition economies" announced the possibility of failing to meet the CFC phaseout date of January 1, 1996. The Vienna meeting treated the defaulters gently, promising financial help with adaption and requiring phaseout timetables and commitments not to export — but Russia denounced the trade restriction, threatening problems for the future. A tougher non-compliance procedure, featuring sticks and carrots, seems necessary.

Evasion of CFC controls is also evident in the rapid growth of a black market. Illegal trade has reached such a pitch that CFCs are now the second most lucrative commodity smuggled through Miami, exceeded in value only by cocaine.

The position of developing countries was one of the thorniest problems at Vienna. Montreal treats them separately; they need not impose controls until 1999, and receive financial assistance with phaseout and adaptation. Yet this structure gives them a powerful incentive to coalesce around a simple demand for more money, stalling progress with further phaseouts, even though in reality their positions differ widely. Latin American and south-east Asian countries, for example, have already moved towards phaseout, while India has gone in reverse, aggressively expanding CFC production and exports. Future treaties should be designed to avoid such largely outdated categorisations — particularly the forthcoming Climate Change protocol.

As environmental treaties proliferate, they sometimes clash. Trade in recycled CFCs fell foul of the Basel Convention on trade in hazardous wastes, until it was suitably amended this year. Hydrofluorocarbons, non-ozone-depleting substitutes for CFCs, should face controls under the Climate Change protocol, as they are powerful greenhouse gases — but would this slow down ozone-depleter phaseouts?

The end of the cold war has ushered in an entirely new system of international politics. Yet governments are still obsessed with the concept of security purely in a military sense. They are ill-prepared to face a new world of environmental threats, where problems which may not surface for another 50 years need to be tackled now before it is too late, and where truly global co-operation is essential. Vienna showed how one important and effective environmental treaty is evolving to meet these new challenges; there are many lessons there to be learned.

Duncan Brack is a senior research fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs; his study on international trade and the Montreal Protocol will be published next year

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WERE any undercover German agents caught in Britain during the last war? If so, what happened to them?

THE Kent Messenger newspaper, dated June 13, 1947, contained a report concerning my late father, police inspector L A Hadlow. Recalling the arrest of four spies on Romney Marsh in 1940, it states: "These men, landed from fishing boats, came ashore at Dymchurch and Greatstone. Two were arrested near Dymchurch sea wall and another one at Littlestone . . . Inspr Hadlow, who was in charge of the police on Romney Marsh and Hythe, took out a 'dawn patrol' of police and military and arrested the [fourth] spy. This man had already established wireless communication with enemy territory, fitting his aerial between two bushes.

"During the trial one of the spies turned King's evidence and he escaped execution, which was the fate of the other three." — *Jeanne A Hambler, Bradford*

DOES any other country have a national anthem whose words are solely about its head of state?

THERE is at least one: that of Negara Brunei Darussalam, or the Kingdom of Brunei, Abode of Peace.

God Bless His Majesty
With a long life
Justly and Nobly rule the kingdom
And lead our people happily forever
Peacefully be, the Kingdom and Sultan
Lord, Save Brunei, The abode of peace.

"His Majesty" is Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darssalam. It gained full independence from Britain in 1984.— *Ward Edmonds, Singapore*

NATIONAL ANTHEMS Of The World by Reed and Bristow records that Brunei's anthem is about its Sultan; Denmark's is about its ancient King Christian; and Oman's calls for the protection of the Sultan. — *Heather Hawthorn, Nottingham*

SURELY the prize goes to the Netherlands, which has a national anthem about its leader of four centuries ago and goes: "William of Nassau, I am, of German blood . . . I have always honoured the King of Spain." — *Cees van Putten, Adelaide, Australia*

FRENCH onion men were a feature of my 1950s' childhood. Where did they come from, and what has happened to them?

THE Johnny Onions came mainly from around Taule, south of Roscoff on the north coast of Brittany. In the fifties, the area grew onions, shallots, artichokes and early season vegetables. Families would fill up a lorry with onions and come over to England and sell them on their bikes. When they retired, they spoke English with the dialect of where they had worked. Most of the district has since been denuded of trees and planted with cauliflowers. The glamour is gone: you can't do much with cauliflowers. — *Reg Brooke, Hull*

MY WELSH-BORN mother remembered French onion men when she was a child of 10 (circa 1908) in Swansea. She claimed they



Johnny Onion: Bretons on their bikes were a feature of the fifties

spoke Gaelic which was understood by the Welsh-speaking inhabitants of the city. — *Frances Gainer, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

WHAT WAS the single most profitable financial transaction in history?

THE LOUISIANA Purchase and the Alaska Purchase were mere bagatelles compared with a land sale in 1870. The Hudson's Bay Company sold Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada for £300,000 (approximately $1,500,000 at 1870 exchange rates). Rupert's Land was defined as "all that land drained by rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay" and consisted of 900,000,000 acres of land which comes to around $.0016 per acre. The deal was so good for Canada that it allowed the company to keep 7,000,000 acres of the best farmland. — *Keith Stolyn, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

THE WORD "cleave" has two opposite meanings, either to stick together or to split apart. Are there other words that do the same thing?

A FAVOURITE example of mine is "fast" as in running fast versus "standing fast". Irony and sarcasm are based on the possible coexistence of opposite meanings in a word. A fat chance is really a slim chance etc. — *Prof Giovanni Carsaniga, University of Sydney*

THE MOST poetic use of this is in Gerard Manley Hopkins's greatest poem, "The Windhover": "Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here/Buckle!" Buckle means both bend under intense pressure and fasten together. Hopkins's use of the word is deliberate and fits in with his whole approach to life. "Glory be to God for dappled things." — *Lawrie Cherniack, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*

IN THE United States the verb "table", in parliamentary procedure, can mean to raise an issue for discussion or to delay discussion of an issue. According to OED this is because when you raise an issue in Congress everyone talks incessantly to no purpose and you might as well have moved to postpone debate indefinitely. That sounds about right. — *Tim Morris, Texas, USA*

DOES a novel or short story written in the second person exist?

YOU WERE impressed by Edna O'Brien's novel A Pagan Place because of the use of the second person. You found the technique was a powerful way for you to understand the feelings being expressed by the author. — *Simon Moseley, New Plymouth, New Zealand*

MELVYN BRAGG'S A Time To Dance is written in the second person. There is also a film by Chris Marker, Sans Soleil, that uses the second person for the voice-over. — *Penelope Hanley, Canberra, Australia*

MICHEL BUTOR published a novel in the second person: La Modification (Les Editions de Minuit, 1957), translated as Change Of Heart. — *Jeffry Larson, Yale University Library*

Any answers?

WHO first realised the need for an international dateline, and what problems arose in its delineation? — *Steve Kelly, East Sussex*

WHY are dried grapes referred to as sultanas? Does it have anything to do with "sultana", meaning the wife of a sultan? — *Tim Goodwin, Queensland, Australia*

WHAT were the "corresponding societies" of the 18/19th centuries? Who were the members? What did they correspond about? — *Derek Rowntree, Daventry, Northants*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to +44 171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Notes & Queries Volume 6 is now available, published by Fourth Estate, price £6.99

Letter From Namibia Margaret Bradley

Mining for the meaning

THEY CALL Namibia the gem of Africa — there's a slogan for every commodity and countries can be commodities too. It's also an appropriate name because Namibia's rocks produce a rainbow of precious and semi-precious stones — diamonds, tourmalines, garnets, amethysts, rose quartz, aventurine — and metals too, gold, copper, lead uranium. Wherever you go there are mines; large ones which dominate the towns that have grown up around them and small ones hidden away on private farms. Their revenues keep this country going. Their troubles make newspaper headlines.

At the gym the other day I saw a T-shirt bearing the legend "Mine Alert" on someone working out near me. As I settled onto the seat of the pec deck, I wondered which mine was in crisis and why. Perhaps it was the Navachab gold mine near Karibib whose workers are striking in protest against management getting higher wage increases and longer holidays than workers — a familiar story to anyone watching UK privatised industries. Here there is the added tension of management being almost exclusively white and workers black.

Or perhaps the problem was at Oranjemund. Inhospitable though the sandy, arid wastes of the Namib Desert may be, in the first decades of this century it was the get-rich-quick paradise of the world. Sometime in prehistory, diamonds were washed out of kimberlite pipes far inland and borne down river to the Atlantic, whose waves tumbled and sorted the crystals before depositing them in a vast swathe of coastal dunes. There they lay hidden until 1908 when a worker building the railway line in German South West Africa discovered a bright pebble.

Soon all kinds of people, from sailors who had jumped ship to shopkeepers and bar girls, had washed up there too. Towns such as Kolmanskop sprang up to cater for the prospectors. Men in the casino would shoot down the Venetian glass chandeliers for fun and casually order the cost to be added to their bills. But those days are long gone. The concession was soon sold to Harry Oppenheimer and the whole area closed to the public. The diamonds, 98 per cent of which are said to be of gem quality, go to Amsterdam and Israel for cutting, though the Miners' Union of Namibia is asking De Beers to set up an indigenous diamond cutting and polishing industry to bring jobs and money back to a heavily unemployed nation.

Of course, in post-independence Namibia homelands and passes have been abolished but the infamous contract labour system remains. Leaving their families behind, men come to live in single quarters, work for a fixed period on a low salary, then return home to wait and see whether perhaps another contract will be forthcoming.

But perhaps the mine alert was at Rossing, the largest open-cast uranium mine in the world. In the early eighties huge profits were made by the owner, RTZ, but as the stranglehold of trade boycotts tightened around the South African apartheid regime, which ruled Namibia till 1990, against the decree of the United Nations, contracts began to dry up.

WORSE STILL, as much of the world has turned its face against nuclear power after Chernobyl, prices have dropped, forcing the company to retrench. And Rossing is also facing the consequences of employing workers who are now aware of their rights and are questioning the company's safety record. A recent test case brought against RTZ by a worker suffering from cancer has, however, proved disappointing. The High Court in London has referred it back to the Namibian courts for trial. With no legal aid available, the litigant is unable to bring his case against an employer as powerful as a multinational.

But perhaps the alert has not so much to do with people as with prices. The town of Tsumeb, whose streets are lined with purple bougainvillaea, scarlet flamboyant and harebell-blue jacaranda is dominated by a spidery metal structure above a fabulously rich mineral vein, producing mainly copper but also zinc, lead, silver, cadmium and a variety of crystals, 40 of which are said to exist nowhere else on earth. Rumour has it that in the good old days of high prices, the taxes due to the South African government from Tsumeb alone more than paid for the road it built to Angola in a vain attempt to defeat the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia. But the last time I was there, the information board at the entrance bore the following sad record: "Days worked without a disabling accident 34: Target 70: Previous best 67."

And even the greatest mine is eventually worked out. With rock bottom metal prices and newer, more modern extraction practices elsewhere in the world, Tsumeb can hardly afford to extract its dwindling resources.

Don't think it impossible for towns to die in this day and age. Kolmanskop is not alone. The tin mine at Uis closed four years ago as the price of tin on the world's stock exchanges plummeted. Built only to service the mine, the whole of Uis came up for auction earlier this year. Everything was to be sold as one lot: houses, supermarket, clinic, swimming pool, golf club . . . even the church. On the coast, or nearer the game parks, it might have become a huge tourist asset but it is lost in the middle of the Namib Desert, surrounded by a waste of sand and gravel plain . . . Perfect for a new religion.

But then again, considering the drought in Namibia — cattle are dying on the communal lands south of Gobabis and Windhoek, and the capital will run out of water if the rains aren't good this year — perhaps it is Kombat mine that is at fault. Situated near Grootfontein, in the midst of Namibia's only truly fertile maize-growing and milk-producing land, Kombat could be about to cause a major ecological disaster. A fissure in the rock has allowed underground water to gush into the mine, obliging the owners to pump it out into Hereroland. As a result the water table on some farms has dropped 30m, forcing farmers to dig more and deeper boreholes in order to tap fossil waters lying far below the savanna surface.

Musing, I moved on to the leg extender machine. Now the T-shirt was exercising opposite me on the abductor and as I looked again, I realised that beneath the heading there was a second line which read, "If you see one, don't touch it, tell someone". Light dawned. So the crisis was not in the gold, diamond or copper towns of southern Namibia. It was in Ovamboland, which was sprinkled with land mines during the war of independence, making it impossible, half a decade later, for farming or travel in some areas. This is today's mine alert in Namibia, but make no mistake, tomorrow it could be in Oranjemund, Tsumeb, Kombat or a host of other small towns and villages.

Chess Leonard Barden

THIS MONTH'S Fide zonal tournament at Linares was a rebuff for English hopes. At stake were five places in the 1996 interzonal, for which the top UK players, Short, Adams and Speelman, are prequalified; and, judged by world rankings, Miles, Hodgson and Sadler all had good chances of progress.

Miles dominated the early rounds and led by 1.5 points at half-way, while Sadler defeated Spain's number one in only 12 moves, a stunning result which is possibly the quickest decisive all-GM game without an obvious blunder.

Illescas-Sadler, Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 **d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 Nc6 4 Be3 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 d5 Na5 7 Nf3 Bd6!** Stronger than e6 played previously. Now White's best is to regain his pawn by 8 Bxc4 Nxc4 9 Qa4+.

8 Qa4+? Bd7!! The point. Black sacrifices a knight to put the white queen in such jeopardy that the ensuing rescue operation wrecks White's entire game. **9 Qxa5 a6** Threatening b6 winning the queen. White must try to create a retreat route to d2 and e1.

10 Nb1 Nxe4 11 Kd1 c3! 12 Resigns. Here b6 is again threatened, so White can only continue 12 b4 b6 13 Qa3 a5 14 Qc1 axb4 15 Bd3 (else f5-f4 traps the other bishop) when both Nc5 and f5 leave Black an overwhelming game, with three excellent pawns for a knight and White's army left on the back row. You have to admire Miguel Illescas for resigning. Many grandmasters would be so appalled at losing they would struggle on just to avoid publicity.

The Linares zonal then took a dramatic turn. Illescas fought back to win first prize outright; Miles, tired and stressed by his lead, lost in the final two rounds and went into a speed play-off with three Dutchmen, two Frenchmen and the lowest-ranked English contender, Peter Wells. The Dutch trio qualified easily, Wells scraped into the final qualifying place and Miles lost out.

So Wells joins Short, Adams and Speelman in the 1996 interzonal at Yerevan. He is at his best in complex openings and it was typical that this win should come from the controversial Poisoned Pawn Sicilian.

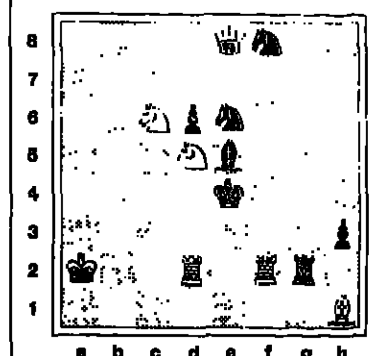
Peter Wells-Loek van Wely, Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Qb6 8 Qd2 Qxb2 9 Rb1 Qa3 10 Bxf6 gxf6 11 Be2 Nc6 Back in 1970, Fischer preferred Bg7 12 0-0 f5.

12 Nxc6 bxc6 13 0-0 Be7 14 Kh1 0-0 15 f5 Kh8 16 e5! This sacrifice opens up e4 for the white knight en route to the K-side, and signals problems for Black on the d file. **dxe5 17 Rb3 Qa5 18 Qh6 Rg8 19 Ne4 Qd8 20 Rh3 Rg7 21 Rd1 Bd7 22 Rhd3 Ra7 23 Qe3!** Winning a piece, for Rc7 fails to 24 Qd2. **Qb8 24 Rxd7 Rxd7 25 Rxd7 exf5 26 Qb3 Qg8 27 Rxe7 fxe4** Black's three pawns for a bishop are no real equivalent since Black's king is too exposed.

28 g3 Qd8 29 Rxf7 h5 30 Rxg7 Kxg7 31 Bxh5 Qd7 32 Qe3 Qd5 33 a3 Qc4 34 Qe2 Qd4 35 Qg4+ Kf8 Kh8 36 Qg6 is also hopeless. **36 Qe6 Resigns.** After Kg7 37 Qf7+ White's queen and bishop will soon force checkmate.

No 2401



White mates in two moves, against any defence (by B J de C Andrade). Many earlier solvers have been tricked by this puzzle.

Hitting the marc

Colin Luckhurst

***ON OUR* adventures on bicycles in various regions of rural France in recent years, we have often been tempted, by way of post-prandial indulgence, to try the local marc.**

It has usually been offered at the end of a dinner which has lasted from 7.30pm to 10pm, and which has most frequently been taken out on the terrace and under the trees in the sultry heat of late summer.

So, a digestif has often seemed to be not entirely a bad idea. And why not try the local product? The French are touchingly loyal to their local wine producers we have learned on these adventures, and the local marc, offered as an alternative to cognac or calvados, is a reflection of the quality and nature of what the local vignerons produce.

Marc, technically, is the distillation of the second pressing of the pulp, stalks, and assorted vinous debris which follows the first pressing for the wine. In recent years it has been increasingly available only as a commercial product.

But that is a function of legislative change forced on local custom because, historically, every vigneron had the right to distil his own marc. And this created a tradition, now coming to its end, of the travelling alembic, the mobile still which toured the peasant vineyards in the weeks after the *vendange* to provide a distillation service for every wine producer.

The law, revised almost 30 years ago in the interests, as the French so quaintly put it, of the suppression of insobriety, made it impossible for the individual vigneron to bequeath his entitlement to make a marc, along with his land, to his heirs and successors. The right died with the individual from the enactment of the legislation and the tradition of the travelling still, once a regular autumnal scene in wine producing areas, declined steadily from that time.

The local marc, and we have tried it in the Beaujolais and in Gaillac in recent summers, can be a fierce and unsophisticated digestif redolent at its worst of the vine stalks which feature inevitably in the second pressing.

ALWAYS willing to try a new taste experience, I was easily tempted to try a balloon glass of the potion, but to my palate an aged calvados, with the heady scents of apple, usually wins on points. And they cost much the same at the table.

We were tempted by the grappa, the Italian version of the product, when we were awheel in Umbria last summer. But the tradition of the local peasant distillation in the autumnal mists interested me when I was reading Geoffrey Grigson's Notes From An Odd Country. The area of Trôo, north of the Loire, from which he was writing, is on the northern extremity of French wine production. Cider starts only a little farther north.

His book, first published in 1970, recorded already the decline in the vineyard distillation tradition. I asked his daughter, Sophie Grigson, the well known writer and broadcaster on matters culinary, what she could tell me about the survival of the tradition.

She replied that she well remembered the travelling stills arriving in the village after the *vendange*, Heath Robinson devices, belching out smoke from one end and a trickle of fiery marc from the other. But she implicitly confirmed the decline to which her father had alluded.

And you cannot deny the good sense, in public policy terms, of restricting the right to manufacture a highly alcoholic spirit in every tiny viticultural domain.

The French have long won the international league table title for the incidence of cirrhosis of the liver, a complaint directly associated with excess drinking — marc available in a large proportion of rural homes would not have been helping the statistics.

ILLUSTRATION: GEOFF JONES

Bridge Zia Mahmood

***THE DECLARER* in a grand slam contract, who has so far lost no tricks, leads the queen of diamonds from the dummy and plays the six of spades from his hand. Hearts are trumps and your diamond holding is K 10 5 3 2. What card do you play?**

You all know me by now, so you will correctly deduce that the answer is the two, or the three, or anything but the king. If you'd like to know why this is the answer, look at the deal below, which comes from the latest book by Robert and Phillip King. Called Contract Killers, the book contains some wonderful bridge hands written in the style of four great crime novelists.

This hand featured Don Vito Cortisone — the Bridgefather — against two unscrupulous lawyers called Sharp and Kean. North-South game, dealer South (see table).

Don Cortisone led the jack of hearts, and Kean saw that he would make his grand slam if the spade finesse succeeded or if he could establish enough club winners in dummy to discard two spades from the South hand. Winning the first trick with the queen, he led the nine of hearts to the ace, cashed the ace of clubs and ruffed a club. When an honour did not appear on this trick, an ordinary declarer would have cashed the king of spades and finessed the jack, making the contract easily enough.

	North	
	♠ A J 3	
	♥ A 6 5 2	
	♦ Q	
	♣ A J 10 3 2	
West		**East**
♠ Q 7 5		♠ 10 4 2
♥ J 10		♥ 4
♦ K 10 5 3 2		♦ J 9 8 7 6
♣ 9 8 5		♣ K Q 7 4
	South	
	♠ K 9 8 6	
	♥ K Q 9 8 7 3	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ 6	

South	West	North	East
Kean	Cort'ne	Sharp	Nina
1♥	No	3♣	No
3♥	No	4♥	No
4 NT	No	5♠	No
7♥	No	No	No

But Kean spotted an extra chance. Not a legitimate chance, to be sure, but this was of no concern. Kean led the three of hearts to the six in dummy, then led the queen of diamonds from the table. When East played low, South discarded a spade! If the Don had won the trick with his king, Kean would have "discovered" that he had some diamonds after all, replaced the spade discard with the ace of diamonds, and taken the spade finesse.

When Don Cortisone played low on the queen of diamonds, though, Kean assumed that it was East who held the king and had failed to cover the queen. Kean thereupon replaced his spade with his small diamond, expecting to be able to discard dummy's losing spade on the ace of diamonds later. But in this situation the rules allow West to replace his card also, so Don Vito took the queen of diamonds with the king to defeat the unbreakable slam.

Buy Contract Killers for Christmas. But don't give it to anyone until you've had a chance to read it first! ©

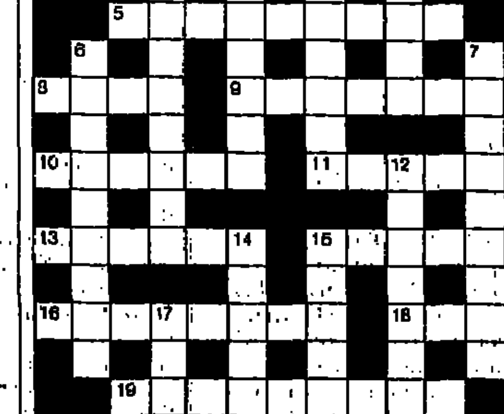
Quick crossword no. 294

Across

5 Noticeable (9)
8 In the centre of (4)
9 (Acting as) informer (8)
10 Indian city with duck (6)
11 Cure (6)
13 Thoroughfare (6)
15 Water down (6)
16 Fearless (8)
18 Melody (4)
19 Shaw play, often upset (9)

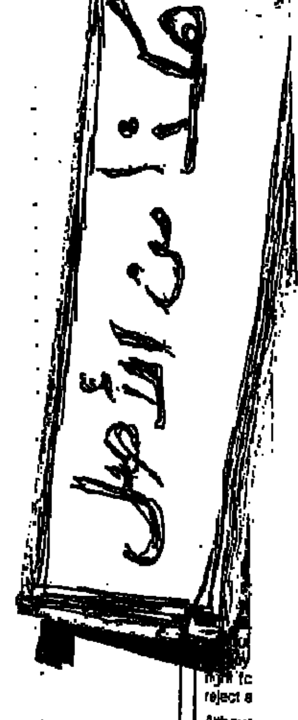
Down

1 Within the bounds of belief (8)
2 Forge (6)
3 Fisherman (6)
4 Fastening or unit of speed (4)
6 Of consequence (9)
7 Victorian statesman with bag (9)
12 Relating to soldiers (8)
14 Drink (6)
15 Subtract (6)
17 Freedom to hang oneself? (4)



Last week's solution





On a journey of rediscovery

Richard Williams

Rebound: The Odyssey of Michael Jordan
by Bob Greene
Michael Joseph £15.99

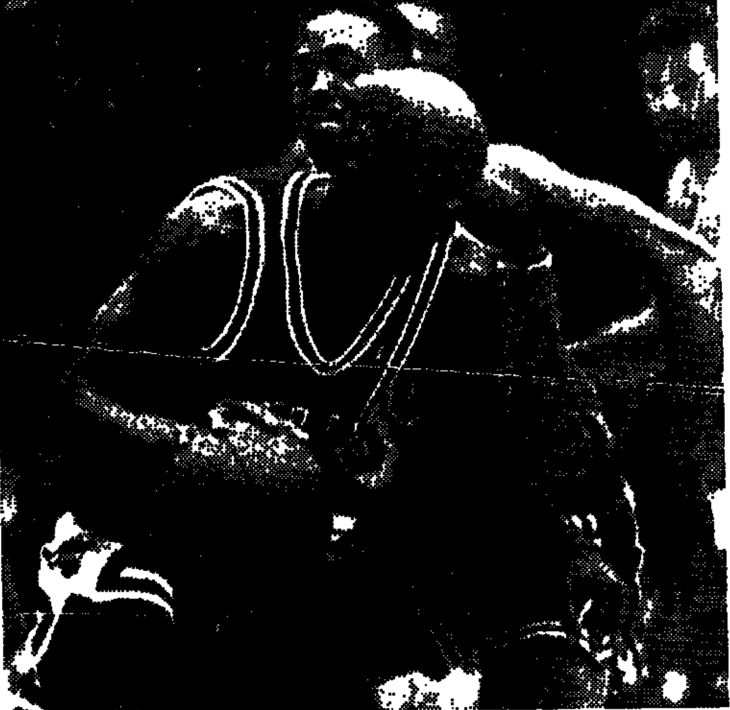
WHEN HIS father was shot dead in 1993, Michael Jordan began to meditate on the nature of fame and identity. Back then, the star of the Chicago Bulls was probably the world's best known athlete, so celebrated that he had stayed away from the opening ceremony of the previous year's Olympic Games lest his very presence should disturb the balance of the event. Unsurprisingly, the murder disturbed the balance of his own mind to the extent that he gave up basketball and attempted to rediscover himself through another sport altogether.

A psychiatrist would probably not be surprised to discover that, when he came to decide on a new sport, Jordan chose one through which he could recreate a boy-hood illuminated by his father's encouragement, unshadowed — unforeshadowed, as it were — by his own adult reputation and its associated million-dollar contracts. This gives the first half of Rebound — an account of his apprentice year in baseball and of the failure of his attempt at self-recreation — a real grip on the reader's emotions.

Rebound is Bob Greene's second book about Michael Jordan, following Hang Time (1992), which portrayed the player in his pomp. Greene, a Chicago columnist who made his reputation by chronicling the lives and times of America's baby boomers, is someone you would be happy to find in the next seat on a long journey. He is, for a start, a good listener. People, often perfect strangers, tell him interesting things. And he is inquisitive: this, after all, is the man who once took the trouble to find out — from the only credible source — whether or not there should be a comma in the title of the song "Louie Louie".

Hang Time was written with Jordan's co-operation, and Rebound enjoys the same advantage. Jordan knows and respects Greene, telling him things no ordinary reporter would hear, giving him access to the passenger seat of his Corvette and to the darkness of the hotel room after yet another defeat. In most hands, the result would be hagiography of one sort or another. Greene takes the darker hues and unresolved conclusion of this new material and turns in something more compelling than its predecessor.

Opening in the optimistic sunshine of spring training, Greene follows Jordan through a winter in the minor leagues, passing through a maze of self-discovery. Greene is sensitive and adroit enough to make us share the growing dismay with which Jordan greets the realisation that the people who are turning up to see him play baseball — swelling crowds at minor league games from dozens to hundreds and from hundreds to thousands — are unprepared for the experience of watching him struggle and are bemused when confronted by it.



Michael Jordan on the rebound PHOTOGRAPH: AL MESSERSCHMIDT

Their disappointment erodes his will, as do the attitudes of team mates who cannot for the life of them understand why a multi-millionaire superstar should be beating his brains out on a wet Tuesday night in South Carolina. So he quits and returns to the Bulls, in a turnaround bringing joy not only to his old fans but also to those whose fortunes depend on the successful merchandising and broadcasting rights of contemporary sport.

When dealing with Jordan's metaphysical struggle in an alien world, the book is riveting. Inevitably, his return to the Bulls lacks the same degree of narrative tension. We know Jordan can play basketball. So does he. That was the problem. But welcome back, anyway. And with Rebound, Bob Greene does justice to this vain but valiant gesture.

A Good Walk Spoiled
by John Feinstein
Little, Brown £17.99

THE tumultuous nature of last September's events in upstate New York may have taken some of the immediacy from John Feinstein's description of the United States victory in the 1993 Ryder Cup at the Belfry, but the long opening set-piece remains a good example of tight-focus sports reporting. The rest of the book, subtitled "Days and Nights on the PGA Tour", maintains the intimacy well enough to have earned it the 1995 William Hill/Sportspages Book of the Year award. It may be too smooth and admiring for some tastes, although its depiction of the hermetic, obsessive world of Norman, Azinger, Strange and their fellows probably doesn't make it the best Christmas present for a young player with ambitions to appear on the "money list".

Stirling Moss's Motor Racing Masterpieces
Sidgwick & Jackson
£14.99

EDITED by Christopher Hilton, this anthology contains several classic pieces, some of them glossed by Moss. Denis Jenkinson's description of the 1955 Mille Miglia, in which he navigated the great English hero to victory, is the best known, but others are just as worthy.

They include Jacques Ickx's sombre report on that same year's Le Mans tragedy, from L'Equipe; Cyril Posthumus's description of the Nurburgring's majestic 14-mile Nordschleife circuit, with its hedges, ditches and 172 corners; and Niki Lauda's inside-the-Vatican account of his major disagreement with Enzo Ferrari.

Or, best of all, the American writer Ken Purdy's essay on Tazio Nuvolari, with its irresistible opening: "Now that Nuvolari is dead, buried in his cloth helmet and his famous turtleneck sweater, a steering wheel on his chest, lying beneath a marble tomb in Mantua, they will soon begin to say that there were others just as good — better, maybe . . ."

Muhammad Ali:
A Thirty-Year Journey
by Howard L Bingham
Robson £12.99

IT'S hard to look through this one dry-eyed. Bingham's collection of black and white photographs begins in Los Angeles in 1962, with a shot of the cocky young Cassius Clay alongside Sugar Ray Robinson and Joe Louis. It ends in 1993, with Muhammad Ali in Nelson Mandela's embrace, his eyes unreadable.

In between, thanks to the enduring friendship of boxer and photographer, is a wonderful selection of images chronicling the life of an extraordinary man, from the punch-bag to the prayer mat, in the ring and on the front porch, spending time with wives and hustlers and advisers and acquaintances from Malcolm X to the Beatles.

This is a classic, and should be read in conjunction with Thomas Hauser's justly celebrated biography, from the same publisher.

Kicking & Screaming: An Oral History of Football in England
by Rogan Taylor and Andrew Ward
Robson £16.9⁵

TOO much football, too many football books: pretty soon the whole overheated game will go pop. Before that happens, here is a football book — accompanying the BBC series of the same name — that was worth the trouble.

Utilising the straightforward oral history technique, the authors assemble the memories of players, managers and fans into a mosaic from which an affectionate portrait of the English game emerges, with all its faults and virtues.

Everybody will find a new favourite fascinating fact: mine is the discovery (from the mouth of Nandor Hidegkuti) that the great Hungarians had warmed up for their epochal defeat of England in 1953 by beating the Renault factory team 16-1 during a stopover in Paris. So 6-3 wasn't such a bad result, then.

Bread of Heaven
by Ieuan Evans and Peter Jackson
Mainstream £14.99

GHOSTED biographies of international rugby players are usually hopelessly compromised affairs, and to judge by appearances — boring cover, clichéd title, banal photographs, dodgy typography — the former Welsh captain's effort would seem to be a pure product of the genre. Yet thanks to a literate, knowledgeable ghost (the rugby correspondent of the Daily Mail) and to his own vast reservoir of experience, Evans comes up with a worthwhile tale.

The long-term decline of Welsh rugby provides a sort of supertext, while Evans's removal from the captaincy before this year's World Cup allows him to comment on his nation's misfortunes with an astringency that would be denied a serving skipper — just about enough, anyway, to neutralise such paragraphs as begin: "Rugby has opened doors to me which would otherwise have remained shut."



Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

Method: Solve the clues and fit the solutions into the diagram jigsaw-wise wherever they will go

A Get addicted or become a nun (7,3,5)
B Plus in place: he's armed, maybe with one (6)
C Words disguised for guide to paths of life (4)
D Nonsense to take lookalike to wife (6,5)
E Number in new type: there's nothing there (5)
F Slave raised bird — um — will it take the air? (9)
G Holly, softly tread to Tiffany's (9)
H Lengthy rhetoric: are joists for this? (7,3,5)
I Place in Paris strange and evil is (9)
J Clive's lot: hot, sarge? Man's first god in bliss (4,7)
Old poet, Hebrew (say), that had his price (7)
K Troubles here for cat with tale of mice (3-3)
L Left the ship with movement broad and slow (5)
M Write whodunnits: who? We do not know (7-3)
N Scots philanthropist finds hitman's sick (7)
O Verb in French accord would shroud in brick (9)
P High-flown words? Pulp chapter — put it straight (6,5)
Q Sounds like this and gardens while you wait (5)
R Subject is the team: they have their place (6)
S Know this "bad verse" book? Night bird in case (7,3)
T Current conflict, carving it with pride (4-3)
U Pure left's lost: no challenge is implied (8)
V Priest backed fish, as true as Chaucer's knight (6)
W No grand piano? Indicate one's plight (4)
X Africans to raise fifth note in horn (6)
Y Bigger harvest: give what from you's torn? (5,2)
Z Farmer (crops or tax?): last soul's in corn (8)

Last week's solution

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The Artful Dodgson

Michael Dirda

LEWIS CARROLL
A Biography
By Morton N. Cohen
Knopf. 577 pp. $35

NEAR THE beginning of this superbly researched and altogether engrossing biography of Lewis Carroll (1832-1898), Morton N. Cohen remarks that the two Alice books and the great nonsense poem "The Hunting of the Snark" are the most quoted literary works in English, excepting only Shakespeare and the Bible. Once that might have meant something, but who today knows Shakespeare and the Bible? In Wonderland, the Mock Turtle tells Alice, children learn "Reeling and Writhing," followed by "Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision." Not so long ago that was funny. Now it sounds . . . all too true.

Humor requires context. The two Alice novels constantly play against rigid Victorian commonplaces, expectations and ideals — many of which, like the Baker, have "softly and suddenly vanished away." How can Wonderland seem quite as wonderful to a child who has lived all his life among electronic marvels? Can even the Jabberwock — "the jaws that bite, the claws that catch" — hold any fears in the era of "Alien" and "Predator"? More and more we really do need Martin Gardner's Annotated Alice, along with a fine biography like this one, to detect the jokes, appreciate the parodies, or simply get the point. Morton Cohen maintains that the Alice books have hitherto been so universally popular because they mirror the anxieties of all children (the arbitrary-seeming injunctions of teachers and parents, the confusions of body-image, changing size, etc.). He may be right, but I suspect that today's kids seldom actually read the Alice stories — the Disney movie is what they know — and Carroll has become the preserve of nostalgic or scholarly grown-ups. If this is true, I wish that Cohen had stressed more fully Carroll's true glory: A perfectly cadenced prose, chock-a-block with imaginative word-play. Almost anything the man wrote — letters to child-friends, reports as the curator of an Oxford common room, an essay on how to compose a letter — mingles cleverness and kindliness in one of English literature's most engaging styles.

In this admiring life Cohen portrays Carroll, born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, as a Victorian hero: Set apart by a passion for little girls, burdened with the sense that he has failed to live up to his father's dreams, fuss-budgety in his habits, and religious to the bottom of his soul, Dodgson needed huge reservoirs of will power to create and then maintain a life of decorum and achievement. Who knows? Without this self-discipline he might have been destroyed like Oscar Wilde. Cohen takes pains to emphasize that the ardent admirer of 11-year-old Alice Liddell and the sometime portraitist of 8-year-old female nudes never in life crossed the thin line that took Humbert Humbert into the arms of his Lolita. In dreams and fantasies, however, Dodgson may have acted out forbidden desires: Hence the feelings of sinfulness and the pleas for divine forgiveness that recur in his diaries, especially during the years of his infatuation with the winsome Alice. (One does wonder, however, about various missing volumes and pages: Just what did they reveal?) Still, Morton Cohen has studied his man for 30 years. He concludes, with a slight defensiveness, that Charles Lutwidge Dodgson kept his relations with his child-friends flirtatious yet strictly honorable. To many in this age of Oprah and Geraldo — fit cousins to the Queen of Hearts and the Caterpillar — that kind of self-control may seem incredible, even sick in its own way.

The Rev. Charles Dodgson spent virtually his entire adult life at Christ Church, Oxford, squirreled away in a sumptuous 10-room nest above Tom Quad, the very model of a 19th-century minor cleric (he was a deacon in the Church of England) and bachelor mathematics don. Except for periodic trips to London for the theater (he adored Ellen Terry), vacations near the sea at Eastbourne, and a single train trip to Russia with a clergyman friend, the author of Alice in Wonderland lived as uneventful and unruffled an existence as one could imagine. He spent hours answering letters, liked to entertain child-friends in his study with mechanical toys and mathematical games, took sides in petty university debates, and published work in his field: little guidebooks to Euclid, a volume on symbolic logic. To keep up a modern reader's interest, Cohen shrewdly organizes his work thematically so that he constantly circles back to the Alice books: He shows how Dodgson made his immortal story incorporate aspects of an actual little girl (Alice Liddell), elements of Oxford society, universal experiences of childhood, and, deepest of all, a kind of allegorical working out of its author's own inner angst. At the biography's center, though, there always glows that golden afternoon — July 4, 1862 — when the three Liddell sisters and Dodgson went rowing on the river and he first imagined the underground realm of the White Rabbit and the Cheshire Cat.

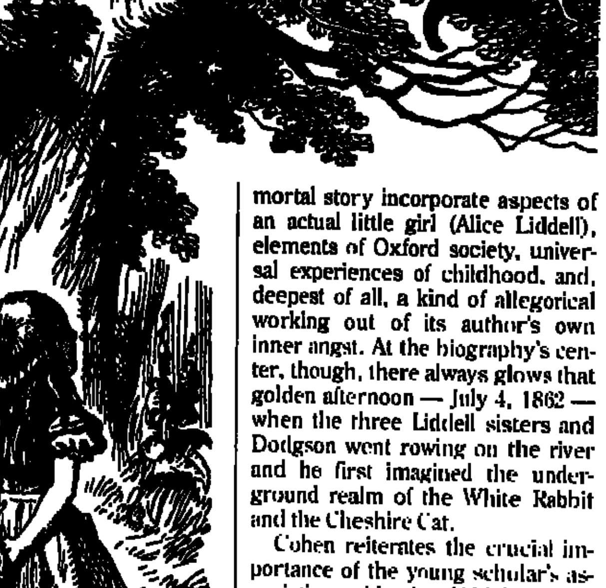


ILLUSTRATION: SIR JOHN TENNIEL

Cohen reiterates the crucial importance of the young scholar's association with the Liddell family. Alice's father was co-author of the Liddell-Scott Greek lexicon, the fashionable dean of Christ Church, and one of the most powerful men in Oxford. He and Dodgson disagreed about virtually everything. The imperious and ambitious Mrs. Liddell was even more difficult. Cohen asserts, after marshaling the evidence and making a number of guesses, that the 31-year-old Charles may have hinted to Mrs. Liddell that at some future date he might ask for the hand of young Alice. After all, his own brother Wilfred had recently proposed to a 14-year-old (whom he married a few years later). Dodgson was probably delicately tentative, but Mrs. Liddell apparently found the suggestion either obscene or unwanted: She intended her girls to wed the high-born and wealthy. As it turned out, the grown Alice and Queen Victoria's son Leopold fell in love, but this time the young man's even more imperious mom insisted that he could only marry a real princess (which he eventually did). A class system can cut both ways.

Cohen devotes a half-dozen excellent pages to Dodgson's notorious "nudities," his photographs of unclothed pre-pubescent girls (four examples survive). How, Cohen asks, did he manage to convince strait-laced, upper-class mothers to allow him to take such pictures? Dodgson's subtle, shrewd technique for achieving his desired end — his avowal of a purely artistic interest in the nude, the hints that other children had been photographed in this way, his expressed wish that the mother or another adult should remain nearby during the photo session — reveal a sly, manipulative streak to his character that Cohen tends to downplay.

DODGSON'S photography — he is second only to Julia Cameron as a Victorian portraitist — gave him access not only to children but to many English notables. He visits Tennyson and finds the poet laureate mowing his lawn. He takes some pictures of a little girl who becomes the once-popular novelist Mrs. Humphry Ward, still others of the mother of Nancy Mitford, the actress grandmother of Sir John Gielgud, the sisters of Bloomsbury's Clive Bell. Girlish of face, dressed always in black, Dodgson, said one contemporary, "always appeared to have emerged from a hot bath and a band box."

Any book about Lewis Carroll is bound to be filled with examples of his wit: "Long and painful experience has taught me one great principle in managing business for other people, viz., if you want to inspire confidence, give plenty of statistics. It does not matter that they should be accurate, or even intelligible, so long as there is enough of them." Still, this is not a compendium of japes or jokes; it properly regards its subject as a major author who merits a serious, scholarly life.

This year has been an excellent one for Victorian biography, and Morton N. Cohen's Lewis Carroll belongs on the shelf next to Denis Donoghue's Walter Pater, Juliet Barker's The Brontes and Fiona MacCarthy's William Morris. Together they sound like the guest list for a slightly mad tea party.

Sultans of Swing Caught in the Act

Jonathan Yardley

THE BLUE NOTE YEARS
The Jazz Photography
Of Francis Wolff
By Michael Cuscuna, Charlie Lourie
And Oscar Schnider
Rizzoli. 203 pp. $60

JAZZ
Photographs of the Masters
By Jacques Lowe with
Bob Blumenthal And Cliff Preiss
Artisan. 252 pp. $40

IT IS both interesting and revealing that the two men whose photographs of jazz musicians are collected in these excellent books are not home-grown Americans but imports from Germany. It is by now a cliche to say that jazz, which is sometimes called "America's classical music," has always been more highly regarded and closely followed in Europe than in its native land, but it is also true. This probably has something to do with America's cultural inferiority complex, something to do with enlightened European attitudes toward race, something to do with our lack of musical sophistication; whatever the explanation, the Continent has always understood our most original art form better than we have.

Both men approached their predominantly African-American subjects with an openness that was clearly repaid with trust; you can see it in the pictures.

Francis Wolff was a professional photographer in Germany before coming to America in 1939, but he earned his living by working at Blue Note Records, which had been founded earlier that same year by his boyhood friend Alfred Lion. Initially he took photographs of musicians in the firm's studios "purely for the love of it," but eventually his pictures became "a distinctive element of hundreds of album covers" as the long-playing record came to dominate jazz recording in the 1950s. Inasmuch as Blue Note was the most important label for the bop and early avant-garde jazz of the 1950s and 1960s, Wolff's pictures are a photographic history of one of the music's most important and productive periods; many of them are also works of art.

Jacques Lowe by contrast has been a professional photographer all his working life. Until now he has been best known as the "personal photographer" to John Fitzgerald Kennedy; his pictures of Kennedy and his family had a devoted following during the 1960s and did much to perpetuate the Camelot myth. He is also, it turns out, a jazz lover of sufficient ardor to have undertaken this project without a publisher's contract or advance. He began it in 1992, "with the idea of photographing every important jazz musician working today."

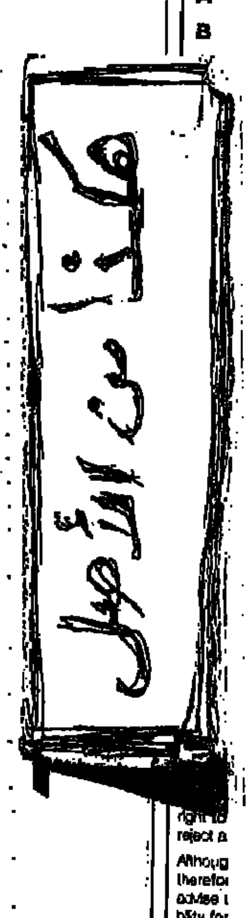
These two books are both similar and dissimilar. Wolff's photographs cover a historic period in jazz but, because they were taken for a single record company, concentrate upon a fairly narrow slice of it; Lowe casts a wider net but, because of the time at which his work was done, fails to catch the many great musicians who had died before he began. Both men shot in black and white, but with different aims; Wolff wanted to pin down the spontaneity and intensity of the recording studio, while Lowe sought to find the inner person that formal portraiture at its best reveals.

Both men capture something Americans have never managed to understand about jazz: its utter seriousness. One senses that these men and women, whether performing for a recording engineer or posing for a photographer, are reaching as far inside themselves as it is possible to go, sparing themselves nothing in the process.

THAT THE faces of jazz are uncommonly handsome has been remarked upon elsewhere, but these pictures certainly do confirm it. Joe Henderson as seen by Wolff is the very picture of dignity, the long ash curling off his cigarette and the smoke drifting across his eyeglasses. Among the memorable faces caught in revealing moments by Jacques Lowe, pride of place must go to Harry Edison, Anita O'Day, Clark Terry, Hank Jones, Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Joe Henderson (again) and the entire Modern Jazz Quartet. The seriousness that these pictures reveal, even when the subject (i.e., Clark Terry) is in a playful mood, has nothing to do with putting on airs and everything to do with a profound confidence in the meaning and importance of their art.

The combined freight for the two books is a whopping $100, which will force many readers to make a difficult choice. This is all the more unfortunate since the books complement each other more than they compete; it is fascinating, for example, to see how gracefully some who came before Wolff's camera in the early 1960s — Sonny Rollins, Horace Silver, Jackie McLean, Kenny Burrell, Art Farmer — weathered the years before encountering Lowe three decades later.

Still, if choices must be made, there is a basis for making them. The Wolff collection will appeal to lovers of modern jazz generally and the Blue Note stable specifically; the book is also a work of art itself, nearly poster-size, beautifully designed and produced. The Lowe book, on the other hand, is smaller and less expensive yet covers more territory. It should be of particular interest to listeners relatively unschooled in jazz, for each photo is accompanied by a brief biography of its subject and in many cases by a list of recommended recordings.



Illegal trading in cigarettes has become a multi-billion dollar business which has led to gang murder.
Andrew Higgins and **Leonard Doyle** investigate

The fag end of the smuggling trade

Nearly a third of the 910 billion cigarettes exported last year 'disappeared' only to be smuggled back on to the marketplace at a cost of some $15bn in lost taxes.

US · UK · Antwerp · Gibraltar · Cyprus · Hong Kong · Philippines

Each vehicle earns smugglers $60,000

Cigarettes are shipped tax free from the UK and US. Traffickers buy them and provide customs with false or forged documents to 'prove' that they have been re-exported. Sales boom as cigarettes are diverted via the blackmarket to Europe, China, and South America.

GRAPHIC: STEVE VILLIERS, JIM LOCKWOOD, GRAPHIC NEWS

THE witness — let's call him Witness X — left for work in his new black Porsche. He never arrived. It wasn't until two days later that his battered corpse was found, floating in a laundry bag near Clifford Pier in Singapore harbour. He had been badly beaten; his mouth and nose had been sealed with masking tape and three lead-weighted diving belts were strapped to his torso.

The body of Witness X was found on April 1, two weeks before he was due to fly to Hong Kong. There he would have identified himself before a Crown colony court as Tommy Chui — and would have betrayed the secrets of a cigarette syndicate involving Chinese triads and corrupt customs officials.

Had Chui, a cigarette trafficker, made it to court he could have put on public record what he had already told investigators from Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Those statements have prompted a worldwide investigation into detailed allegations which include:

- Bribes of up to HK$100 million ($12 million) paid by a cigarette syndicate to several employees of the Hong Kong subsidiary of British-American Tobacco. (All have since left the company and there has been no suggestion that BAT knew of these bribes or was in any way connected with the Witness X murder in Singapore.)
- Involvement by triad gangs in smuggling to the world's biggest cigarette market, China and Taiwan, of many brands which are produced by foreign multi-national firms.
- Collusion by corrupt customs officers and shipping companies in an illicit cigarette trade which is said to cost China up to a $1 billion in lost revenue each year.

A glance at the official US export and import statistics for cigarettes shows that a third of the world's exports — that is, 280 billion cigarettes "disappear" every year. They are logged out as exports from the US, but somehow drop off the official statistics and are widely assumed to have fallen into the hands of highly organised smugglers. Investigators believe that smuggling on such a scale deprived governments of more than $15 billion in tax revenues last year.

"The main beneficiaries are the cigarette manufacturers who get paid in full for their product, and the smugglers who make a fortune on every container of cigarettes they divert," says Luc Joossens, a Belgian anti-smoking campaigner whose business is tracking the complex routes by which smugglers get the cigarettes on the market without having to pay duties.

The Chinese government estimates that it loses $1 billion in revenues annually from black market trading in imported tobacco; the duty on cigarettes in China is up to 420 per cent and cigarette taxes represent 7 per cent of total Chinese tax revenue.

The Belgian port of Antwerp with its vast warehouses is now the main international transit port for US manufactured cigarettes. Last year it handled 72 billion cigarettes, out of a total of 74 billion imported to the EU. There are many curiosities of the Antwerp trade: one of them, for example, is that over a third of the cigarettes which arrived there were forwarded to Cyprus — where even if everyone chain-smoked they couldn't work their way through a fraction of them. Many of these cigarettes are sold to Lebanese businessmen based in Cyprus who then supply them to the Middle Eastern market.

Others are shipped to Albania, from where they are broken into smaller consignments to be smuggled into Italy. Others are shipped to Gibraltar, a den for trafficking into Spain, where smuggled Winstons are estimated to make up 10 per cent of the market.

But many of the cigarettes never leave the EU and are simply diverted by criminal gangs while in transit. Customs officials estimate that two lorry-loads of cigarettes go missing every day: that's 20,000,000 cigarettes. In some cases, forged customs documents are handed in to support claims that the cigarettes left the EU and that no import taxes are due. In other cases, lorries are simply hijacked by gangs while in transit. The profits on a container of tax-free cigarettes are enormous — some $60,000 — and the risks relatively low. If the container is seized, the loss is only the $21,000 it cost to buy the consignment. The risks are much lower than the drugs trade, and tobacco traffickers are not social pariahs.



The new opium of the people . . . China is now the world's largest market in illegal cigarette trading

But this is relatively minor illicit business. When James "Buck" Duke, founder of the business empire now known as British American Tobacco, first heard of a new cigarette-making machine, he shouted: "Bring me the atlas." He pointed to one vast country in particular: "That", he said, "is where we are going to sell cigarettes."

He was talking of China — and in Buck Duke's day, its population was only 430 million. Today, it is more than 1.1 billion and 300 million of those are confirmed smokers. Before the 1949 Communist revolution, half of BAT's profits came from China: the BAT brand, State Express 555, was Mao Zedong's favourite smoke. Along with other the other multinationals, BAT is scrambling to get back into a market four times bigger than that of the entire former Soviet Union, the other major growth area.

Anti-smoking campaigners feel that the rush to sell cigarettes to China now is very much like the opium trade, which began early in the 19th century when international trading firms cold-bloodedly set out to make as many Chinese as possible addicted to the drug, and then profitably supply that addiction. Hong Kong itself was seized from China by Britain after the 1841 Opium War mostly as an amenable place from which to do business in the drug. Like today's multinationals, opium traders hired lawyers and experts to debunk the "mischievous fallacy" that opium is addictive and dangerous: "The use of opium is not a curse but a comfort to hard-working Chinese," argued that notable Hong Kong firm, Jardine and Matheson.

Because of import restrictions in China, foreign cigarettes are only meant to be available in special tourist shops, but two recent reports, one by NatWest securities, the other by Salomon Brothers, point out that BAT actually controls half the market for imported cigarettes in China. A former BAT employee supplied information which was substantiated by market analysts: that 20 per cent of BAT's 1993 profits — around $200 million — was based on revenue from cigarettes subsequently smuggled into China.

Worldwide cigarette consumption fell slightly last year, but western manufacturers are booming, thanks to the demand for mild-tasting status-symbol brands in Russia, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and China.

Crucial to this are distributors like Giant Island Limited, a firm which Witness X helped set up in 1986 and which he later accused of paying bribes and smuggling billions of cigarettes to China and Taiwan. Between 1986 and 1993, Giant Island and associate firms purchased more than $1 billion of cigarettes, mostly from BAT.

A former director of the firm and partner of Witness X, Chong Tsui-jun, has been charged with tax fraud. Also in detention is a former Hong Kong customs officer, Henfrey Tin, arrested in connection with smuggling allegations.

Between 1986 and 1993, Giant Island and associate companies became a leading distributor of cigarettes for BAT Company (Hong Kong) Limited, a subsidiary of Britain's third largest firm, BAT Industries Group. It also peddled Japanese cigarettes purchased from a Hong Kong subsidiary of Japan Tobacco International Ltd. It has been alleged that Giant Island increased its highly profitable relationship with BAT through pay-offs to staff.

In a Hong Kong court last month, a magistrate reviewing charges against Chong, referred to very large sums of money paid by Giant Island to Jerry Lui, BAT's former export director, who has left Hong Kong. Bank records, the magistrate added, showed that "very large sums of money were paid to Jerry Lui" from an account used by Giant Island. He found no evidence to link Chong to such money, suggesting the real culprit was another partner.

"We are aware of the bribery allegations against former BAT employees," said Ms Knight of BAT in Hong Kong, "BAT has a corporate ethics policy which does not permit the acceptance of material gifts or incentives backed by strong management controls. No one has been dismissed for taking bribes."

BAT runs a large factory in Hong Kong and also uses the territory as its regional headquarters. Instead of selling directly to the retail market, it relies on authorised distributors. Some of these dealers focus on the Hong Kong market itself, buying duty-paid cigarettes for sale inside the territory. Others, like Giant Island, concentrate on the more lucrative export trade.

Professor Judith Mackay, an anti-smoking campaigner based in Hong Kong, says that illegal trafficking does not damage the business of the multinationals. It develops brand loyalty in new markets: "They lose nothing from smuggling. It makes their cigarettes cheaper. This means more people can afford them and take up the habit." Most smuggled cigarettes carry no health warnings.

The NatWest Securities report noted that BAT had maintained sales to China despite tight import restrictions imposed in 1993: "Since BAT's cigarettes reach the Chinese market through informal channels, mostly via Hong Kong, this has had little effect on actual volume."

BAT declined to comment specifically on what "informal channels" might involve and said only: "We are aware that some of our products do end up in China. We do not condone this and have lobbied Chinese authorities to reduce taxes and trade barriers to remove the incentive to smuggle." (In 1841, Lord Palmerston said, when the Chinese retaliated against the foreign traders by banning opium imports and resolutely confiscating and destroying their stock-in-trade: "While the opium trade is forbidden by law, it must inevitably be carried on by fraud and violence.")

For smugglers to avoid China's heavy duty and strict controls on imports demands meticulous planning, but the profits are immense and the penalties far less severe than for drug trafficking. A favourite ploy allegedly used by Giant Island was to arrange a secret rendezvous in the South China Sea for ships which had been loaded up with cigarettes from bonded warehouses in Hong Kong and Singapore. The cigarettes would then be transferred to fishing boats, out of the many small and large Chinese ports, for an onward journey. Fearful of pirates, imposters and government officials, the smugglers identified each other using a pre-arranged code — the serial number of a Chinese banknote. Each month as many as 100,000 boxes containing a total of one billion cigarettes, entered the Chinese market in this way.

How did an experienced multinational like BAT become entangled with an outfit as dubious as Giant Island? When a rival cigarette trader started to cut into its business with BAT, Giant Island called on the services of gangsters like Bearded Lam, Dark Cow and Tall Fatty; and it is this kind of triad connection which may have led to the death of Witness X. Police have now issued arrest warrants for five suspected killers, all of them known members of the Wo On Lok Triad Society, which is more elegantly called Shui Fong (Water and Wind).

One of these is Johnny Cheung, a former prison officer jailed in Glasgow in 1988 for attempted murder, and currently under mainland Chinese detention in Beijing. Hong Kong authorities have asked that he be handed over for questioning.

Witness X's murder certainly seemed like a Chinese gangland execution. That black Porsche of his was later found in a parking garage on the fourth floor — four being a number with strong connotations of death in Chinese; its keys were left on the ground, arranged in the insignia of a triad gang.

The murderers even left a coded explanation of their deed. The three diving belts they fastened to Witness X before dumping him in Singapore harbour each had a different number of lead weights. One had four, another five, another six. Such a configuration, say experts in the arcane lore of triad numerology, carried a message: "Death for betrayal of the brotherhood."

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN INITIATIVE IN DEBT AND RESERVES MANAGEMENT (ESAIDARM)

VACANCY

MACROECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

The Eastern and Southern African Initiative in Debt and Reserves Management is a regional inter-governmental organisation of ten countries with its Secretariat in Harare, Zimbabwe. The Initiative's aim is to build and strengthen capacity in member states to manage external debt and reserves. ESAIDARM's mandate has recently been expanded to include training in macroeconomic and financial management. Applications are now invited from suitably qualified candidates for the position of Programme Director to head the newly created Macroeconomic and Financial Management Training Programme.

The Job

Reporting to the Executive Director and working in close consultation with senior officials of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, Central Banks and other affected Government departments in Member States, the Programme Director.

- manages the entire Macroeconomic and Financial Management Training Programme.
- gives strategic direction to the Training Programme
- designs annual work-plans, co-ordinates the design of courses and training material, recruits trainers and trainees and evaluates and submits reports on the training programme.

Requirements

An advanced degree in an area of Macroeconomics or Finance with several years proven senior managerial experience in a Government Ministry/Department or Central Bank coupled with excellent communications and writing skills. Applicants must also be computer literate. Additionally, applicants with previous experience in managing a major training programme will have an advantage. Applicants should be citizens of countries of the Eastern and Southern African sub-region.

Benefits

The successful candidate will be appointed to a fixed-term contract at a negotiated remuneration package competitive with other regional organisations.

Application Procedure

Applicants should submit a detailed CV, with names and addresses (including telephone and fax numbers) of three referees, by 15th January 1996 to:

The Executive Director
ESAIDARM
P O Box 2960
Harare
ZIMBABWE
Fax No: 263-4-735074
Tel No: 263-4-722954



MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL
(A Registered Charity)

A registered charity, Marie Stopes International is an overseas aid organisation specialising in designing and managing reproductive health care programmes in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab World.

MALAWI - PROGRAMME CONSULTANT

Marie Stopes International's local partner based in Blantyre currently runs 5 reproductive health centres and an innovative marketing/communications programme. It will be expanding to 45 reproductive health centres and allied activities over the next 6 years, making it the longest non-governmental provider of health services in Malawi. A Programme Consultant is required to assist and support the Programme Director and Management Team in the implementation and management of the programme in line with project objectives.

The Programme Consultant will be responsible for the provision of the management support and technical assistance in order to strengthen the organisation structure, human resource management, financial management, management information systems and programming capabilities, ensuring strategic and operational planning and for monitoring implementation.

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Dreaming of a green Christmas

Multicultural schools are replacing the Nativity story with a more earthly message, writes **Lyn Gardner**

THE Virgin Mary is in a bit of a tizz, and the archangel Gabriel is in hot dispute with a minor cherub. At St Luke's Church of England primary school in Kingston upon Thames, the four- and five-year-olds are getting ready for the third-and-final performance of the annual Nativity play.

Within minutes, peace will have broken out and the play will begin. Mary will be serene, with a smile as enigmatic as that of the Mona Lisa, the host of seraphim and cherubim will be positively angelic, the lambs fluffy, and the singing, if not exactly celestial, certainly loud enough to drown out an entire heavenly choir.

You might think that at this time of year scenes like this would be enacted in schools all over the country, but in fact with the exception of church schools like St Luke's, the customary Nativity play is fast becoming as much of a rarity as beef on school dinner menus and TV-free Christmases.

Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus are no longer automatically taking centre stage when it comes to the annual Christmas school show. The traditional Nativity play — itself a residuum from the ancient liturgical dramas and the medieval Feast of Fools celebration combined, with a dash of Victorian sentimentality — is giving way to the 90-second Nativity, the Nativity scene from the innkeeper's point of view, from the shepherds' point of view, even the donkey's point of view.

In some schools, the Nativity is being eased out altogether or relegated to the tots in the nursery. Increasingly, the Baby Jesus is getting the same billing as Santa, the tooth fairy and Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

But while some parents feel cheated if they don't get to see their little darling dressed in a white sheet sporting a tinsel halo, others welcome the shift of emphasis.

At schools like Gayhurst, a Hackney primary school where 22 languages are spoken and 38 per cent of the children speak a first language other than English, Christmas is just one of any number of religious festivals that the school aims to celebrate. In last year's Christmas show, which took the theme of light, the Nativity was featured (the 90-second version) but so too was the Hindu festival of Diwali.

The real question at urban, multicultural schools like Gayhurst is not whether to do a Nativity play but how to negotiate the issue of Christmas altogether.

"We have to walk a thin line between meeting parental, staff and the children's expectations of what they see outside the school, and also meeting the needs of those children in the school for whom Christmas doesn't happen at all," says head teacher Diane Roome.

Ironically, while government legislation requires schools to provide religious education and collective worship that is of a broadly Christian character, the introduction of the National Curriculum has hastened the demise of the Nativity play. In some schools, teachers and pupils are so exhausted by the demands of the syllabus that no one can summon the energy to practise "Away in a Manger" unless they can find a way to link the properties of straw or the mean average winter temperature of stables into key stages One and Two of the National Curriculum.



"It's important that children have an opportunity to experience and take part in productions. The sheer amount of teamwork and co-operation involved is an education for the children in itself," says Patrice Baldwin, head of Tunstead primary, a rural primary school in Norfolk, and chair of the Primary School National Drama Panel.

They know all about teamwork at Latchmere Junior School in Kingston upon Thames. On the stage of the school hall an age-old struggle between good and evil is taking place. But the opposing forces are not angels and devils, but the Greys and the Greens.

In A Green Christmas, an environmental musical, the Greys, led by Main Threat and his assistants Miss Guided and Miss Led, are trying to convince everyone that environmental problems don't exist. Meanwhile the Greens, led by Con Servation and Lorraine Forest, want to persuade humans to use the Earth's resources sparingly. Christmas could be threatened unless the Greens win.

Six teachers and around 90 children from the upper school have been working on the Latchmere production after school since last September, a rehearsal period that compares rather favourably with the National Theatre.

"Our children are quite a sophisticated bunch," explains Wendy Allen, Latchmere's English coordinator and the director of A Green Christmas. "We have to look for a show that has a theme that will excite and interest the children. This year they've been involved in a project to improve the environment of the playground so this musical fits in rather well."

But if A Green Christmas seems far removed from the traditional Nativity, Wendy Allen is determined to make a link. To this end, she has provided a coda to the play that paradoxically provides the show's strongest dramatic moment.

As a star appears in the night sky signifying the end of the grey era and a new beginning for the world, the Three Wise Men appear at the back of the hall and slowly make their way to the front, three small, timeless figures taking a long walk into eternity.

Around the corner at St Luke's, the strains of "Away in a Manger" die away for the second time. Parents beam at their angels beatifically. The angels beam back.

After the performance, as the Virgin Mary skips homewards, I ask her if she is looking forward to Christmas. "Don't be silly," she says crossly, "we've just had Christmas."

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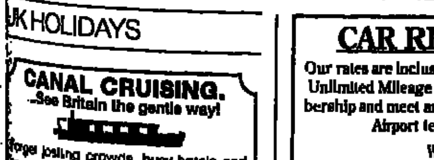
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Pictures of health

Donated paintings are replacing fish tanks in hospital wards. They cost less, don't need feeding and are proving to be therapeutic, writes **Maggie O'Kane**

WHEN a speedy thief managed to prise a small painting from the wall at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London, the staff drew lots as to who would confess to the art co-ordinator, Susan Loppert. She was presumably relieved that it wasn't the £1 million Veronese hanging in the chapel. Loppert said it was great that the thief was so moved by the painting that he or she felt the need to steal it.

She is passionate about the therapeutic value of art in hospitals and vehemently defends the £400,000 in donations spent at the Chelsea and Westminster over the past two years.

The critics are everywhere. Lady Bobby Abbot was taking coffee in the hospital's atrium: "I'm all for having jolly things around the hospital to cheer things up, but really, how many old ladies' hip replacements could have been done for *that*." *That* is Allen Jones's 60ft seal with a gigantic red ball stretching on to the hospital's third floor. The cost, £100,000. How many hips?

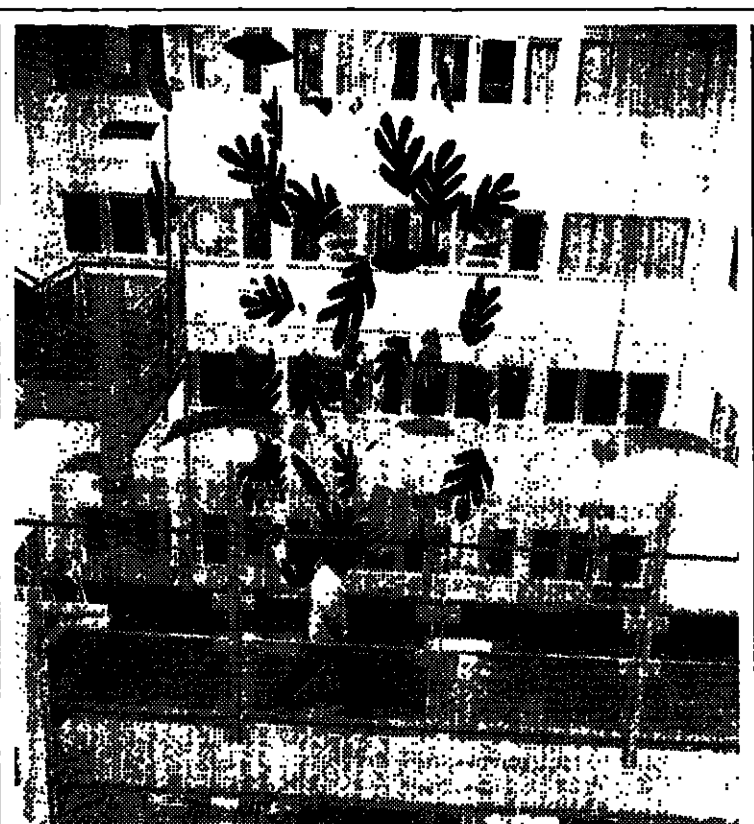
Loppert sighs: "None of the money we've spent is coming out of the NHS. It comes from donations by people who believe that art helps people to get better. It's not a question of deciding between a painting and a hip operation."

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital is bigger than Wembley stadium and a triumph of light and space. The paintings, mobiles and wall hangings are either commissioned directly from artists or are on loan from the Arts Council or from the Paintings in Hospitals charity, set up in 1947 by a far-sighted social worker called Sheridan Russell who, against all opposition from the hospital adminstration, borrowed paintings from friends and artists to exhibit them in the National Hospital in Queen's Square in London. Paintings in Hospitals now rents out 1,500 contemporary British paintings for £15 a year each.

The driving force at Chelsea and Westminster is Dr James Scott, who chairs the hospital's art selection committee. Dr Scott found that patients in the pre-op anaesthetic room of the old Westminster Hospital, which had a ceiling painted with a scene from a summer's day, went under with much less stress than those gazing at the usual magnolia ceiling.

And it is not just the patients who benefit. Susan Wilson, a former nurse who now works with Paintings in Hospitals, talks of the comfort she took from a print of Picasso's mother and child hanging in the ward while nursing a dying boy. "The child's parents never came to see him and the nurses picked up the emotional slack."

Dr Raphael Eban, the charity's honorary director, feels that hospitals are moving in the right direction: "There are fish tanks going in and I say to them, 'Get paintings instead. They cost £15 for the year and you don't have to feed them.' " The ethos is now seeping into mainstream health care. This month Westminster Health Care launched a pilot project for two old people's homes in London and has commissioned students at the Roehampton Institute of Art to provide works for the homes.



Artful distractions . . . Mobiles form part of the colourful collection at London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

The history of art in British hospitals is gloomy. Rich benefactors saw the donations of religious paintings to hospitals as a deposit for heaven when their time came. At the Hospital of St Wulstan, dying patients were taken to a room where the panels were painted with scenes that included St Erasmus on a windlass being disembowelled. On the wall opposite was St Michael weighing souls to decide their destiny. Today at the Chelsea and Westminster, patients see the long silk banners of Patrick Heron dancing in the breeze.

"This hospital", says Loppert, "looks awful from the outside, but inside it's an example of the best of late 20th century architecture. We want to fill it with examples of the best of late 20th century art and the artists want to be here — so we get a good price. We're not having Francis Bacon or Damien Hirst. Here it's bright and hopeful, designed to take people's minds off the nasty processes they are going through."

At the hospital's open day, earlier this year, 1,500 people came to tour the hospital. Asked about what impressed them most, the operating theatres were in first place. The second most popular feature was the art.

A Country Diary

Michael Binnie

OCKHAM, SURREY: For the two and a half years that we lived in the Hindu Kush the continuous background noise to our lives was the roar of the Lotkoh River. In winter it was clear running, fordable and benign. By mid-summer it was thick with sediment, a seething, untameable monster — and a killer. Now, back in darkest Surrey, we hear every early morning and evening a similar sound from across a dozen fields. You could call the M25 a river of sorts.

And there are other similarities and distinctions. Instead of the hilarious mynahs striding like gawky, bespectacled school girls across the lawn, we have slow-moving, rather stately pheasants picking their way delicately over the grass. A regular visitor is a green woodpecker who has currently abandoned woodpecking and hops a little clumsily about the lawn earnestly forking the ground.

Below our house the ground falls away to a water meadow where most mornings a temperature inversion creates a lake of gossamer thin mist. Hidden below it this morning was a flock of some 200 wood pigeons feeding. When they saw me they burst up through the mist in a clattering explosion of wing beats and scattered to distant tree tops.

Letter from Saskatchewan Teresa Harley

Cold enough for you?

ONE OF the simple pleasures we prairie people have is watching newcomers begin to realise just how fierce our winters can be. "Cold enough for you, yet?" we ask, as toes, eyelashes and everything in between freeze, and are disappointed if the incomer isn't suitably shocked and appalled by the prospect of several months of below-zero temperatures. We always remind them that at least it's a dry cold.

We chuckle over the story of the English immigrant who, fooled by a beautiful blue sky and bright sunshine, went out for a walk in his shirtsleeves when the mercury had slumped to minus twenty. The fun increases if the newcomer has never seen snow before.

During our first winter in Saskatchewan, 38 years ago, my co-workers were disappointed when I wasn't excited about the white stuff, unlike the Australian woman who'd had my job before me. She had gone outside in her nightie and danced in the snow.

But this December, we supposedly acclimatised residents were the ones taken by surprise. We were warned that a severe blizzard was blowing in from the west, and we knew road conditions were going to be impossible. However, we thought we could handle it. Consequently, there were multiple car pile-ups behind jack-knifed semi-trailer trucks, and dozens of motorists waiting to be rescued.

One rural school bus full of students trying to get home before the storm hit, lost power and stalled a couple of hundred yards from a farmhouse. It took the farmer over an hour to drive his tractor through gale force winds and zero visibility before he could get to the bus with a heater, blankets and food.

A school teacher, following a school bus in her truck, went off the road into the ditch and was stranded for five hours as the driver's cab of her truck filled with snow driven in by the winds. Fortunately, she had a mobile phone, so people knew where she was. But it still took two farmers five hours to get to her, even though they were only a mile or so away. When her rescuer opened the truck door, she was almost completely buried in snow. One of the farmers got his ears and face frostbitten but denied he was a hero. "There was someone out there, so we had to find them," he said.

All across the province volunteer firefighters, ambulance crews and the police struggled to rescue stranded motorists. "We all have farm backgrounds," one said, implying they were used to prairie surprises, and to helping people in trouble. Highways were closed, and the winds were so fierce people were literally blown off their feet.

The force of the storm was shocking, even to us old-timers, but we knew we were getting back to normal when the local paper told the story of a doctor who had arrived here from South Africa a few days earlier. On the morning of the blizzard he started work at a hospital in a small town 80 miles south of Saskatoon and spent the next few days getting his first practical experience of treating hypothermia.

"I brought a lot of warm clothes, but they weren't made for this," he said. "This is the first time I've ever seen snow." We know he's catching on, though, because he acknowledged, "Yes, it's cold, but it's a dry cold."

Perhaps we'll wait a while before we tell him the joke about the researchers at the University of Saskatchewan, here in Saskatoon, who discovered that people who live in cold climates like ours are more intelligent than the softies who live where it's always nice and warm. The researchers estimate that one more winter like this one and we'll all get smart enough to move some place else.

Where to go, though? We're told by the UN that Canada is the best country in the world to live in. A Canadian economist, using the UN's criteria, has decided that Saskatchewan is the best province. So now the search is on for the best community in Saskatchewan. One reporter put her money on Climax just because of the name. I hear on the radio that they're experiencing their third blizzard of the winter, but I'm sure it's a dry cold.

Word from the House

OBITUARY
Sir Francis Boyd

IN THE 1938 crisis over Germany's threat to invade Czechoslovakia, Neville Chamberlain rose in the Commons to prepare the House for almost certain war. Before the end of his speech he was handed a note inviting him to meet Hitler in Munich.

The Manchester Guardian's new parliamentary sketch writer was Francis Boyd, who has died aged 85. He was then only 28, young for one of the paper's senior reporting posts, but he started his story in a way that precisely reflected the country's strange mood on that extraordinary occasion: "Members of the House of Commons got as near today to a sense of the peace of God that passeth all understanding as human beings are ever likely to do."

This account was given by David Ayerst in his history of the Guardian up till 1956. He did not remark on the subtle resonances and the touch of sardonic ambiguity in Boyd's use of the phrase, "that passeth all understanding", but it forms part of a piece of writing that shows the pre-war Manchester Guardian at its finest.

"Sardonic" is a word which well described Boyd. In his 30 post-war years as the paper's lobby correspondent and then its political editor, he was renowned for his nightly telephone calls to the news desk when the House was sitting: "Boyd here. B-O-Y-D. I'm the political correspondent. I'll be here tonight if the Government falls."

After Ilkley Grammar School and Silcoates, near Wakefield, Boyd joined the Leeds Mercury, aged 18 in 1928. Six years later he went to the Manchester Guardian as a reporter and in 1937 was appointed parliamentary correspondent. As lobby correspondent after the war, he provided the bedrock of the paper's political reporting.





Guardian man . . . Boyd, 1972

At Westminster he was admired for his integrity, anti-élitism and his firm, liberal belief that it was right for society's better-off to provide money through taxation to improve the lot of the less so.

It was this underlying social conscience which made him an archetypal Guardian man and fully justified his knighthood in 1976. Typically, he did not at first believe the letter asking him whether he would accept a knighthood. "They've just got the wrong Boyd," he said crossly to his family and then phoned Number Ten to complain.

John Bourne

John Francis Boyd, journalist, born July 11, 1910; died December 10, 1995

Raising the company profile

Twyla Tharp meets the Royal Ballet and creates a rare collaboration, writes **Judith Mackrell**

IT'S PILGRIM'S Progress meets Petipa; it's *commedia dell'arte* meets Alice In Wonderland; it's Heaven's angels having a hoe down. Definitions don't come easy with Mr Worldly Wiseman, Twyla Tharp's new work for the Royal Ballet, partly because it scales so many different levels of fantasy, partly because it uses so many styles of dance and partly because it sometimes tells a story — and sometimes leaves you hanging.

Certainly, it's like no Opera House three-act ballet you've ever seen. Its plot has a morality — rather than fairy-tale logic — and its hero Mr WW is a wild, garrulous figure, an artist turned mad by his own grandiose imaginings.

He's abetted in his excess by an apprentice, Master Bring-the-Bag, and as his life nightmarishly disintegrates he encounters Mistress Truth-on-Toe who leads him to a realm of art. Here, Mr WW learns discipline and humility, and when he returns to the world he's ready to leave everything to his apprentice and follow his muse to the stars.

David Roger's designs add a wonderful madness to this plot, particularly in Act 1 where Mr WW wanders through a magic lantern world of gaudy, fugitive images, peopled by cartoon eccentrics in fancy dress who begin, bizarrely, to turn into dancing vegetables.

Act 2 is all white light while Act 3 is a Victorian watercolour that turns into the cosmos when Mr WW decides to follow his fate. The excerpts from Rossini which make up the score are equally vividly eclectic. The famous yowling cat duet is used to torment Mr WW in his madness, the overture from William Tell sends the apprentice skidding round the stage, limpid piano music accompanies the serenity of Act 2, while the Kyrie from the Petite Messe solennelle is Mr WW's own inner music.

But the dancing trumps everything for variety, with escalating feats of male dancing; silent movie chases and astounding leaps of logic where a shiminying jazz move turns into a grand ballerina exit or where pure classic dance turns goofily flat-footed and giggly.

Yet the problem with having so many images orbiting around the plot is that they sometimes fly out of control. And there are two reasons why the ballet feels insufficiently grounded. The first is that Tharp doesn't establish the character of Mr WW and his sidekick clearly enough — during much of Act 1 we don't know what all their banter and madness is about.

Secondly, though the score's variety works perfectly as incidental drama it's not coherent enough to construct an imaginative world for the ballet. Too often we feel left out in the cold. But if the ballet isn't as consistently good as certain moments promise, it's held triumphantly together by the choreography and its love affair with the dancers.

In the role of Mr WW, Irek Mukhamedov is larger than life — intemperate, funny, passionate and gauche. Tetsuya Kumakawa, as the apprentice, dances with more baroque brilliance than even he thought possible — his tiny deadly body flashing round the stage — and Darcey Bussell is all grand simplicity — the still centre of the ballet.

Yet this isn't just a work for the principles. For a supporting quartet, Tharp invents a new classicism where razor-cut speed is decorated with lavish sensuality and proportions are thrown into the air and realigned in breathtaking new symmetries. With the ensemble, she has bodies sparking fiercely and edgily off each other, then forming configurations so exquisite they still the heart.

For Mr Wordly Wiseman is that very rare thing — a company ballet in which every dancer looks important and wonderful. The audience roared its approval but the dancers even more will love Tharp for the gift she's made them.

Centre piece . . . Darcey Bussell is all grand simplicity in Twyla Tharp's new work, Mr Worldly Wise PHOTOGRAPH: HENRIETTA BUTLER

Song and dance fails to hide the heartache and solitude

THEATRE
Michael Billington

MUSICALS don't have to be fat, trite and expensive. They can also, like Stephen Sondheim's Company, be sharp, witty and lean. But what distinguishes Sam Mendes's fine revival at London's Donmar Warehouse from Harold Prince's original 1970 production is that it brings out even more clearly the heartache and solitude that lies underneath the show's snappy, revue-like structure.

Mendes not only pays as much attention to George Furth's book as he does to Sondheim's music and lyrics, he has also come up with a framework that defines the show's meaning.

The story deals with a 35-year-old Manhattan bachelor's shifting relationship with five married couples and three girlfriends. But in Mendes's production, birthday boy Robert sits alone in his stylish loft conjuring up his friends as if they were simply figures in his dream.

This gets right to the heart of the matter: that it's the story of a born loner who realises he is defined by other people's expectations. To his chum's wives he is both desirable sex object and proof of Wilde's dictum that "in married life, three's company, two's none". To his transient dates, he is a good lay and listener but a man of mystery.

Sondheim's revisions also heighten the hero's dilemma: whether to sacrifice busy solitude for emotional commitment. He has restored a first-act number, "Marry Me a Little", that exactly exposes Robert's nebulous idea of a relationship ("keep a tender distance so we'll both be free"). And this is precisely balanced by the closing song, "Being Alive", in which Roberts yearns for the demands of partnership and "someone to crowd you with love".

Sondheim even addresses the question of whether Robert is gay: the answer is just a little but never quite enough.

This version digs deeper without destroying the punch and point of the dazzling individual numbers. The highlight is Sophie Thompson's brilliant rendering of "Getting Married Today", in which her headlong pattern reveals the blind panic of a bride on her wedding morning. But Adrian Lester, in a stunning performance, adds a new dimension to Robert by suggesting that the big showbiz number, "Side by Side", is the fantasy of a lonely cokehead.

Mendes, as in his revival of Cabaret, has rethought a classic musical from top to bottom. His version may not have the glitz of Prince's original. But he has sharpened the key point: that Sondheim and Furth are writing, with compassionate wit, about a man trying to escape the promiscuous demands of friendship to discover just who and what he is.

It's all a matter of taste. I readily concede there is a faint touch of early Goon Show about Charles Wood's version of Alexandre Dumas' French Romantic drama The Tower at London's Almeida Theatre. When, for instance, a loyal servant rushed into a darkened cell looking for his trussed-up leader and cried "Capitaine, ou ètes-vous?", the theatre was filled with the sound of barely suppressed titters.

Yet, for all its occasional absurdities, I found this revival of Dumas' ripe historical melodrama a hundred times more enjoyable than Les Miserables, with all its solemn banalities. For a start, it has a driving, pulsating narrative: something we have lost sight of in modern theatre. The story revolves around Marguerite de Bourgogne, married to Louis X, who has an unfortunate habit of luring her lovers to a tower, making love to them in masked guise and then somewhat recklessly dispatching them into the Seine. A dashing Burgundy captain blackmails Marguerite in order to achieve state power and then reveals that two of her lovers are . . . but, no, that would be telling.

Written in 1832, the play has all the qualities you expect of melodrama: fixed characters, bags of plot, an atmosphere of duplicity, lust and intrigue. This undercuts Howard Davies's production, which goes all out for full-blooded conviction and which boasts a magnificent set by John Napier dominated by clattering iron grilles, a crepuscular walkway and a sinister central tower with cryptic torsos embedded in the fabric.

The actors, for the most part, also play it blessedly straight. Sinead Cusack, in leather corset and gingery wig, hurls herself uninhibitedly into the role of the royal adulteress, and Adrian Dunbar is both saturnine and suave as her persecutor. High-flown tosh? Probably. But, in the wise words of Kenneth Tynan, they guffaw presumptuously who guffaw at the naivety of the past: their own naivety may be even worse.

A little piglet goes to market

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

DEAR Aunt Marjorie,

Christmas comes but once a year and film critics like myself must be among those glad it isn't twice. I was hoping you wouldn't ask me once again, as an addendum to your Christmas card, what you can take the kids to see over the holiday. It's emphatically not the season in which one wishes to storm the doors of the local cinema, especially not when dragging recalcitrant children intent on eating half the sickly, over-priced wares in the foyer. Once inside, one might well be faced with a film about a wet-snouted, orphaned piglet who speaks American and badly wants to become a sheepdog. I know that even you, let alone ferocious little Willie, would balk at that.

As a matter of fact, that's exactly what you'll get if you go along to Chris Noonan's *Babe*. But don't turn tail and run. Just settle down with your popcorn and try to last the first 20 minutes. By that time, you might well be hooked.

It's not the greatest film in the world — those American voices, for instance, are a trial — but it defies all usual expectations. Quite why is difficult to explain, but it's almost as if some Australian with more than a passing interest in Buñuel has been engaged to make a Disney Yuletide attraction.

The film ought to be cloying, but is very seldom so. It ought to be pretty silly too, but it has a tongue-in-cheek irony that doesn't fall into parody and still allows us to want the piglet to emerge triumphant. One is at a loss to know whether it is a spin-off of Animal Farm or Cold Comfort Farm.

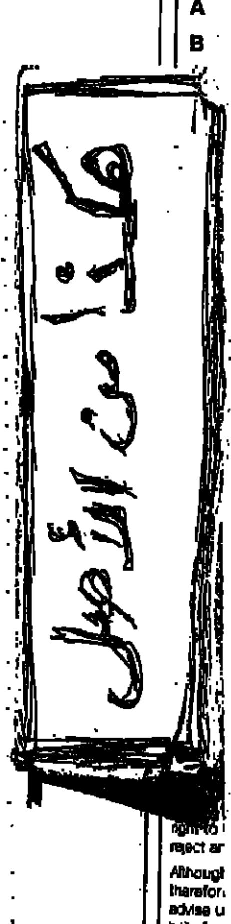
Now, before getting too enthusiastic because there's a certain intelligence up on the screen at this time of the year, one should admit that some of the special effects, though doubtless difficult to achieve, aren't all that wonderful, and others don't really convince at all.

But it's the general tone that counts, and that is surprisingly sure. Babe (the piglet) is won in a weight-guessing raffle by farmer Hoggett, who allows Fly, his sheepdog, to raise him with her puppies. He is also succoured by an elderly sheep and an equally eccentric duck. Babe manages to avoid becoming Christmas dinner, and when Hoggett tries him out herding sheep, his dogs are so furious they have to be sedated. The little pig is eventually trained up for the forthcoming sheepdog trials, where . . .

I'll leave you and Willie to find out what happens, but do tell him that George Miller, who made the Mad Max films, is the producer and co-wrote the screenplay. That may persuade him to give it a go.

As for yourself, I know you like animals and the cast also includes a Yorkshire pig, two border collies, an Indian runner duck, two border Leicester sheep and a blue Persian cat. More seriously, it's the story of someone who badly wants to be different and, in the end, succeeds in doing so by changing the natural order of things.

Of course, don't take it all too seriously — now and again three, possibly blind, mice appear at the bottom of the screen laughing their heads off. One of them might be Buñuel, but I wouldn't bank on it.



A feast of tasty morsels

Sally Singer

The Way We Are
by Margaret Visser
Viking 305pp £14



ILLUSTRATION: SPIKE GERRELL

MARGARET VISSER is a South African-born, Toronto-based classicist who has made a name for herself through explorations of the basis of modern eating habits and table manners. Her general thesis, as advanced in Much Depends On Dinner and The Rituals Of Dinner, was hardly original — daily routines and material culture speak volumes about a society, if not a civilisation. But the breadth of her knowledge and the genial, common-sensical tone with which she scoured her findings for evidence of binary oppositions (male/female, public/private) was, somehow, utterly charming: Lévi-Strauss meets Reader's Digest.

In The Way We Are, a new collection of her magazine columns, Visser's obsessive, eclectic gaze takes in not only food (caviar, Jell-o, fava beans, etc) and manners (greetings, kisses, tipping), but fashion (high heels, swimwear, gloves), mannerisms (slips of the tongue, blushing, blank-faced stares), seasonal icons and special rituals (Santa Claus, parades, the Easter Bunny) and a host of general categories.

Visser is at her best when discoursing on food or fashion; her magpie approach well serves one's desire, in these areas, for the trinketry of detail. Thus we learn that "18th century Irish chickenskin gloves were . . . cut from the skins of aborted calves, and so fine that they came folded in the shell of a walnut"; or, "restaurants derive their name from a Paris establishment that offered only soups: it advertised them in 1765 as restaurants divins, divine restorers"; or, "Braniff International ended the plain plane in 1966, offering "stews" [stewardesses] who made several costume changes en route, ending with hot pants." Visser asserts that "with the baby boom following the second world war, we knitted hysterically for our offspring" and reminds us that once, swimsuits were more like winter jumpers than gym-wear — "there was a feeling that wool kept one warm in the water". She relates the advice offered by the Jell-o company to customers wishing to fill a swimming pool with the colourful, quivering stuff — "it is simply not wise to risk getting it up one's nose"; and by the vegetarian Pythagoras to his followers: "Abstain from beans!" The essays which proceed from a more general query — the meaning of a colour or a gesture — are less effective.

In place of lively historical titbits, Visser can succumb to Desmond Morris-like blanket pronouncements about "universal" cultural meanings and un-ironic adages better suited to needlepoint samplers: "A very good way to defuse and rise above a crowd's contempt is to make an even larger crowd laugh with you, even if it's at yourself." Surprisingly, her pithy mix of anecdote and analogy also proves ill-suited to discussions of folkloric figures and practices, like Santa Claus and valentines, whose mysterious origins and myriad incarnations require a more rigorous investigator.

Still, even when less than convincing as social criticism, there is something winning about Visser's writing. She has such faith in human ingenuity, in the world we've inherited and the one we've made, and wants so much to awaken us to its possibilities and potentials (for example, we can save the sturgeon population if only we give up our historically and class-specific taste for caviar), that it is impossible not to enjoy her whimsical yet learned musings.

A final note: a curious editorial decision has led to a brief biblio-graphy appearing at the end of each essay. If Visser's sources had been grouped together at the end of the collection, they would have seemed formidably diverse. As presented, however, they are revealed (to reheat a phrase of John Updike's) as the skimpy grey underwear beneath the finery of the finished article.

Poor Citizen Gates needs to get a life

Robin Hunt

The Road Ahead
by Bill Gates
Viking 286pp £17.50

THE THING about Orson Welles's Citizen Kane was, at least he had his Rosebud. At least he got into trouble over girls, and had the good grace to make his Xanadu a gothic nightmare.

Until recent reports that Microsoft is being investigated over claims that its Windows 95 deliberately disables rival Internet software, we have enjoyed no such excitements with our very own Kane, Bill Gates. True or not, the suggestion does introduce a certain snaky charm to the man who founded Microsoft.

This is a quality sadly lacking in Citizen Gates's 286 pages of blue skies, nirvana — and not a mention of God anywhere.

The nearest we get to personal revelation is on page 206: "I used to date a woman who lived in a different city. We spent a lot of time together on e-mail. And we figured out a way we could sort of go to the movies together. We'd find a film that was playing at about the same time in both our cities. We'd drive to our respective theatres, chatting on our cellular phones. We'd watch the movie, and on our way home we'd use our cellular phones to discuss the show."

Passionate times ahead, then? The problem with The Road Ahead is that it is full of this bloodless, no fluids please, we're on-line future-speak.

Sure Gates has the vision thing; he's had that far longer than most of us, but he isn't exactly a preacher, more the conference speaker who gets the first slot after lunch.

Functionally written, combining a host of the most "basic" computer facts with the Teflon utopianism of a successful 19th century medicine man, The Road Ahead offers an easy Infobahn-like view that should appeal to everyone — if they can stomach the leaden prose. Hence: "It is human nature to find ways to convert synchronous communications into asynchronous forms."

It tries in vain to make Gates a Lord Reith of the Net waves. A social thinker.

Gates's thesis is commonplace. Open Net access to all, learning for life, global communication, lovely talk-to-granny-video-conferences, e-mail. Gates feels free to leave the social problems to some government, somewhere. But not all social problems. "When teachers do excellent work and prepare wonderful materials, only their few dozen pupils benefit each year," Gates writes.

What he means is that if Microsoft were to own teachers' material then all that thinking could be turned into software. Windows, not only 95, but 99, 2004 and even 3954.

He is a rich young man, with seemingly only virtual interests; one who goofed off from Harvard, where he enjoyed poker more than studying, to set up Microsoft.

Who knows, if he'd stayed on he might even have dated more women in the same city. Or realised that being a have-not was about more than not possessing a lap-top computer.

Farewell to all that

David McKie

Who Goes Home? Scenes from a Political Life
by Roy Hattersley
Little, Brown 315 pp £17.99

MICHAEL FOOT, that dear, doomed leader of the Labour Party, once wrote an astringent letter to his subordinate Roy Hattersley, requiring his resignation from the Labour front bench. Not for heretical doctrine or words spoken out of turn: the offence, as the culprit at last discovered, when his leader's tirade reached its end, was that he had blasphemed in his Guardian Endpiece column against Foot's cherished heroine, Dorothy Parker.

I have to say, in much the same spirit, that despite its delights, this farewell to political life (Hattersley is due to retire at the next election) knocks a huge and perhaps irreparable hole in its author's credibility. This is not because he's bowed out with an entertainment, rather than a political credo, or one of those ponderous works of auto-hagiography with which politicians shuffling off into oblivion so often choose to weigh down the library shelves.

Though he treats them without solemnity, the characteristic Hattersley themes are here. The grief at what was done to Labour at the start of the eighties by comrades who chickened out and fanatics who stayed; the frustrations of a life which might have been given to government and has largely been lived in opposition; above all, the fierce commitment to preaching equality, the dimming of which among the commanding heights of his party has made him, in recent months, the least expected and most compelling critic of the Blair revolution.

What makes this book such a joy is that it explains what so often baffles outsiders: why it is that people get so hooked on the vocation, trade, pastime and game which is political life. It's full of enticing stories of friends and foes alike. There is Stafford Cripps, in something close to a fit of the vapours at the very idea of manipulating a budget for political gain. There's Hugh Dalton, arranging a disastrous lunch after Crosland's first marriage and chortling as the not-very-happy couple depart: "Well, I think that got them off to a very bad start."

In a word, it's a treat. Except for the collapse by the end of Hattersley's credibility. Fans of Endpiece will not be too thrown by close colleagues misspelled, Blackpool hotels misnamed, Neil Kinnock sent to the wrong university, even Wigan losing the Rugby League cup final in a year when Leeds played Wakefield Trinity. But some things go too deep for forgiveness. Bad enough that even a Sheffield Wednesday supporter should believe that Norman Hunter of Leeds and England played at right-back. But for this celebrated Yorkshireman to refer to an opening bowler called "Truman" is more than the spirit can bear. High time Michael Foot wrote him another letter.

The last word in trivia

James Wood

The Reader's Companion to Twentieth-Century Writers
edited by Peter Parker
4th Estate 825pp £25

LAST YEAR, Peter Parker and his contributors produced a reference book that was also a distinguished exercise in criticism, The Reader's Companion To The Twentieth-Century Novel. This is the companion to that companion — the back door, so to speak, to the earlier edifice, through which all the important gossip and trade must flow.

As before, Parker's contributors have been encouraged to spike their entries with a little high-proof poison, and the result is a book that reads less like a study-aid than a collection of acute essays. Minor writers, on the whole, are seen as minor; and unstable reputations are not kept unfairly afloat. Nicholson Baker, for instance, is seen through a long funnel, as he should be: and how quickly he disappears! "At first, Baker could do little wrong where critics were concerned; his books, however, have made a steadily diminishing impact."

Parker's last book judged most of the important English-language novels of the 20th century; his new one judges the important trivia. Enchanting it is, too. The critic William Empson gave his two sons three Christian names each: one from Afrikaans (he married a South African), one from English, and one from a town captured by the Allies on the day each son was born. So we have, in the case of one of them, "Jacobus Arthur Calais".

The errors are flyspecks: an occasional unwillingness to interrupt delightful gossip with the embarrassments of mortality (neither Frederick Exley nor Howard Nemerov are alive, contrary to what this book might wish for them). But the book feels impressively invulnerable. To write of Henry Green that he was "quintessentially English — he disliked reading any book set abroad" is to paint a myth; one of Green's favourite writers was Céline, and he told one interviewer that he kept Kafka's journals by his bedside.

Certain entries read as if they had been ghosted by National Geographic Magazine. Is it enough to say only that VS Pritchett's autobiographies "provide a fascinating glimpse of bygone days"? Or that James Kelman lives in "a tenement" (he does not; my sister shared a landing with him for five years) and "drinks and smokes hard, frequents bars, likes his tea strong, often has a beard, and is reputed to be a fierce interviewee". Often has a beard, eh? Doesn't one hear, at such moments, the clatter of closing ranks, somewhere at the back of a very small and unimportant London literary party? But such swerves are rare. Though it is not as instructive nor as enthralling as its big brother, it is funny, acute and quietly cruel. One suspects that literary companions will never be the same again.

From Philip Roth's Mickey Sabbath to Gitta Sereny's Albert Speer, 1995 will go down as the year of the monster book judging by who has been reading what

The best of tomes

Adam Mars-Jones

Two in the Booker intake whose cause I was unable to advance: Penelope Fitzgerald's **The Blue Flower** (Flamingo, £14.99), a minor miracle of sympathy and crispness; and Richard Francis's **Taking Apart the Poco Poco** (Fourth Estate, £9.99), which took an almost ostentatiously standard subject — a day in the life of a nuclear family (plus, crucially, Raymond the dog) in an English town — and treated it with delicate intensity.

Jenny Turner

February, usually the darkest month, this year had the power to light the whole year. It brought Gillian Rose's novel **Love's Work** (Chatto, £9.99), a tough, passionate philosophical memoir about not despairing. And also **Morvern Callar** by Alan Warner (Cape, £9.99): a rave girl, a Scottish superstore, the author's death and a yearning romanticism all in one.

William Trevor

Genius is not easy to portray. In **Lewis Carroll** (Macmillan, £25) Morton N Cohen succeeds impressively in connecting the diffident, stuttering clergyman who was Charles Dodgson with the inspired, sharp-witted author. Meticulously researched and notably well-written, this is a biography that resists the temptation to dress assumption as fact or to tease too much out of the blend of innocence and high sophistication that coloured the life of a remarkable and complicated personality.

Jonathan Coe

In the year when British publishing standards came under sustained attack from market forces, let's salute three heroic, uncommercial ventures: Harvill's publication of **The Poet**, a marvellous novel by the Korean writer Yi Mun-Yol (£8.99); and Viking's commitment to two monumental translations — Albert Cohen's massive swansong **Belle du Seigneur** (£20), and a 200-year-old wonder, the weird labyrinthine **Manuscript Found In Saragossa** by Jan Potocki (£16). One of the home-grown novels I most enjoyed was Michael Bracewell's **Saint Rachel** (Cape, £9.99), misleadingly touted as a "Prozac" novel, but really a dark comedy of English inertia.

Blake Morrison

Richard Ford's **Independence Day** (Harvill, £14.99) is a wonderful, meandering long weekend of a novel which contains one of the great heart-stopping scenes of recent literature when sportswriter-turned-estate agent and divorcee Frank Bascombe takes his son to the Baseball Hall of Fame. In Michael Longley's **The Ghost Orchid** (Cape, £7), a big poet works delicately with miniaturist forms, like a heavyweight walking a chihuahua.

James Wood

Sabbath's Theater by Philip Roth (Cape, £15.99): in time this will be seen as Roth's best novel so far. Mickey Sabbath, Roth's diabolic hero, is a Nietzschean monster, who wants, in the old nihilistic tradition, to make death appear to us more desirable than life. Albert Camus's **The First Man** (Hamish Hamilton, £14.99) lovingly retrieves his childhood in Algiers. Here is not the philosophical, but the carnal Camus: instead of pondering the struggle of existence, he savours the details that help us survive it.

Michael Billington

Philip Hoare's **Noel Coward** (Sinclair-Stevenson, £25), a fascinating portrait of a man propelled by fame, applause and his own inner conviction; but also a man curiously cut off from daily reality, which was the source of his eventual decline. The great discovery of my reading year was a novel written in 1884, **La Regenta** by Leopoldo Alas (Penguin, £9.99), a towering masterpiece about the battle between a power-mad priest and a heartless Don Juan for the body and soul of a judge's wife.

Ian Jack

The Railway Man by Eric Lomax (Jonathan Cape, £15.99), the story of how Lomax, tortured by the Japanese, eventually comes to forgive one of his torturers. I thought the particular trick and delight of it was its portrayal of a British obsession with objects — in Lomax's case, railways — and how that sustained him through the worst of times. **The Revolt of the Elites** by Christopher Lasch (Norton, £16.95) is the last indictment of the new capitalism from the late Professor Lasch, whose thoughts aren't easily categorised and all the better for that: there are arguments here that would appeal to Tony Blair and Michael Portillo.

Eric Hobsbawm

Neal Ascherson's **Black Sea** (Cape, £17.99), for a combination of intelligence, sensitivity and knowledge of the subject. Robert Harris's **Enigma** (Hutchinson, £15.99), because it's a very good thriller and because it's about Bletchley, a source of great fascination. **The Encyclopaedia of New York** (Yale, £40), edited by Kenneth T Jackson, almost as endless as New York itself, and Gitta Sereny's **Albert Speer** (Macmillan, £25), for the intrinsic interest of its subject and the intrinsic passion of its author.

Noam Chomsky

Elizabeth Fones-Wolf's **Selling Free Enterprise** (University of Illinois, $16.95) is the first major study of the huge corporate propaganda offensive after World War II to try to overcome the social-democratic currents that were then dominant. Norman Finkelstein's **Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict** (Verso, £14.95) is the most revealing study of the historical background of the conflict and the current peace agreement. Mark Curtis's **The Ambiguities of Power** (Zed, £14.95) is an extremely scholarly study of British post-war foreign policy.

Candia McWilliam

Penelope Fitzgerald's The Blue **Flower** (Flamingo, £14.99) is a novel in which the unsaid speaks; it is a masterpiece. **Morvern Callar** by Alan Warner (Cape, £9.99) is a wild tale of death and pleasure, conveying at the same time a paradoxical innocent happiness in an urban desert no distance from Oban. It contains some remarkable nature writing. **Theatres of Memory** (Verso, £18.95), by Raphael Samuel, offers a generous and hopeful understanding of the past and how it affects our society and the individual.

Julian Critchley

Roy Jenkins's **Gladstone** (Macmillan, £20) has brilliantly filled the hiatus left for 30 years since the publication of Sir Philip Magnus's biography. Simon Heffer's **Carlyle** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20) — not the most attractive of Scotsmen, but a volume into which much work had been put. Otherwise, the second volume of the **Letters of John Betjeman** (Methuen, £9.99), an admirable act of filial piety. The worst book? **Krug and Shepherd's Pie: A Short Life of Lord Archer of Weston-Super-Mare,** by Alastair McAlpine.

John Updike

Shaken and enlightened by **Galatea 2.2**, by Richard Powers, published in the UK in June 1996 (Abacus, £9.99), starring a computer that holds within its circuits a little girl as tear-wrenching as any orphan in Dickens. While winging my way to England, I kept myself calm with the Penguin edition of **The Europeans** by Henry James (£1.99): a nice thing about the transatlantic James is that there is always more of him to read. This small, early novel is dry and crisp and very clear about what the author thought the differences between the New and Old Worlds were.

Naomi Wolf

Claire Messud's breathtaking first novel, **When the World was Steady** (Granta, £5.99), stuns the reader who considers that a 29-year-old woman could so fully imagine the lonely journeys of the two middle-aged sisters. Geraldine Brooks's **Nine Parts of Desire** (Hamish Hamilton, £15.99) is a courageous and sensitive exploration of the too often invisible world of women in Islamic countries. The Dalai Lama's **The Power of Compassion** (Aquarian, £6.99) is a tolerant and unpretentious guide to what we can only hope will soon become a less sectarian and more compassionate world.

Colm Toibin

Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage by Tim Robinson (Lilliput, £20), a loving anatomy of the largest of the Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland, in which the point where nature and culture meet in the island is observed with great beauty and precision. **My Alexandria** by Mark Doty (Cape, £7) was a big discovery — a new American poet published for the first time on this side. Formally perfect, with wonderful control of the stanza; but the tone is never beautiful for its own sake — there's a real urgency about what's being said. And **New and Selected Poems** by Michael O'Loughlin (New Ireland Books, £5.99), one of the most neglected Irish poets: poems written from his long exile in Amsterdam, meditations on the ruins of Europe, on history and exile; the tone wry and exact.

Elaine Showalter

In the night, men are crying, and women are reading about it. I very much enjoyed Martin Amis's **The Information** (Flamingo, £15.99), Nick Hornby's **High Fidelity** (Gollancz, £14.99), Richard Rayner's **The Blue Suit** (Picador, £9.99), and especially Philip Norman's **Everyone's Gone to the Moon** (Hutchinson, £15.99) — about the glory days of London journalism.

Francis Wheen

The Prince and Princess of Wales are allowed to have their say, but when their old servant Wendy Berry produced her own account of life at Highgrove, **The Housekeeper's Diary** (Barricade, $19.95), she was promptly injuncted. Having read it, I can see why: if Berry is to be believed the Princess's yearning to love everyone does not extend to the below-stairs classes. Copies can be obtained by mail order from American bookshops.

John Ryle

The Huaraoni are the Ogoni of Ecuador — indigenous people whose land and resources have been exploited without qualm by outsiders, notably the Conoco oil company, in cahoots with the Ecuadorian government. **Savages**, by Joe Kane (published by Alfred A Knopf in the US; not yet in the UK), is an uncommonly well researched and elegantly written account of this clash of cultures, free of sentimentality and romantic primitivism, the besetting vices of the genre. **Bury Me Standing** by Isabel Fonseca (Chatto & Windus, £19) is an equally accomplished account of another minority, strangers on our doorstep, the Gypsies of eastern Europe. These are books on subjects that are hard to write about with decorum and without tedium, but they succeed admirably.

Julian Barnes

Rush Limbaugh likes to stroke the ditto-heads in his audience with a line about not seeking the death of every single liberal and communist. No, he explains jocosely, each college campus should have a couple of liberals on display, just so that right-thinking folks can see what a fossil looks like. The spikiest fossil around is still Gore Vidal, and if it's too much to hope that the ditto-heads could be jolted by **Palimpsest** (André Deutsch, £20), the rest of us should still applaud Mr Vidal's stirring lack of mellowness in this, his autobiography; may he have long life and much free ink. Art books are rarely readable, even when their texts are good. The illustrations inevitably assert themselves — every picture does indeed tell a story, so why should we listen to anything further? But Mark Stroud's little book, **Edward Hopper** (Ecco Press, $12) cleverly revises this given. Its pictures are in poor black and white, while the text is dominant, acute, colourful and brief. Equally jargon-free is Kay Redfield Jamison's **The Unquiet Mind** (published in the UK next April by Picador, £15.99), a compelling account of manic depression by a self-studying professor of psychiatry.

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

The definition of tranquillity

Paul Evans

IN MY corner of Shropshire, indulging in some gratuitous trespassing, I wandered up the golf course to watch the moon climb above dark wooded ridges. But a sickly orange glow of street lights reflecting against low cloud hung over the urban centres to the east, and the dull, relentless drone of traffic from the motorway was inescapable.

All sound — owls calling, wind in the trees, invisible feet of scurrying animals — was embedded in this noise, as were my thoughts. Although this might be solitude, it was certainly not tranquillity.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) have produced a map showing how the tranquillity of rural England is being shattered. The map looks like a Jackson Pollock painting. The white splatters of urban areas and roads almost completely obscure the green that denotes tranquil countryside. Even in the green bits it's impossible to escape low flying aircraft and agricultural machinery.

The pressures of urban living mount and infiltrate more and more of the natural environment — countryside, bush, forest, outback — through development, new roads, increased traffic, and the artificial lights and noise that go with it. So much so, that many people yearn for tranquillity. But what is it? Where can you find it? And what good does it do?

To discuss these questions I went to talk to Dr Jane Howarth, a philosophy lecturer at Lancaster University, who has written about sense of place and the aesthetics of nature. We left the hubbub of the campus and struck out on the Lancashire coastal footpath that runs along the estuary of the River Lune from Condor Green.

ON the CPRE map even this is a white (untranquil) blotch. But despite electricity pylons and docks in the distance, it only took the liquid, whistling cry of a curlew and winter sunlight rippling on the estuary as the tide rose across the salt marsh, to step out of urban turmoil and into what Howarth described as the mood of the place.

Our moods, she said, even though we often try to ignore them to push on with our goal-driven lives, are very similar to moods in nature. Nature ebbs and flows, it changes, it's moody. These moods are not about anything; nature just is. "We have natures too," says Howarth, "and they are moody natures."

The descriptions offered by science and aesthetics fail to properly interpret our relationship with nature. Only through direct contact, and without a running commentary, can we strip away assumptions and theories which restrict what we experience and discover what tranquillity is. It's not something you stumble across, it can't be created by tranquillisers or virtual reality. It's something that the body recognises as a restorative, liberating quality in nature. "We need to articulate attitudes which have a purchase on the world as we experience it," says Jane Howarth.

There are many places in nature, and not just the more remote "green" parts of the map, where we can experience tranquillity. But estuaries seem to be better than most. The great expanse of sky and sea; the blurring of boundaries between the two; mudflats and marshes; patterns of waves, clouds and birds in flight.

But the more you talk about it the less tranquil it becomes. Far better to just shut up and soak it all in.

Chess Leonard Barden

SOLVE A three-mover, and you could win £50. This year's Christmas puzzle was among the best creations of Edith Baird, the Judit Polgar of chess problems and the outstanding woman composer in chess history. Baird's output was more than 2,000 problems, many of great ingenuity.

White checkmates in three moves, against any defence. Your answer should give White's first move and the lines of play leading to mate in three. Send your solution on a postcard to Christmas Chess, Weekend Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER (or by fax on +44 171 239-9935), to arrive by first post on Wednesday, January 10.

There are awards of £50, £30 and £20 for the first three correct solutions examined after the closing date. The answer and names of prizewinners will appear at the end of January.

● For a belated chess gift to make your New Year games more enjoyable, I recommend Gary Lane's book Blackmar-Diemer Gambit (Batsford, £10.99). The B-D Gambit often starts 1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3, but it can also arise from seemingly remote openings like the Alekhine 1 e4 Nf6 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 or the Centre Counter 1 e4 d5 2 d4.

Blackmar was an American music professor, Diemer a German amateur who analysed and played the B-D for most of his life. Their pawn sacrifice aims at rapid development and attack, and is promising against defensively-minded opponents who become flustered under pressure.

Gary Lane, a former Commonwealth and West of England champion, is among the UK's best opening writers, lucidly explaining the ideas and illustrative games. The B-D Gambit has acquired a cult following in Lane's own backyard at Torquay, judged by this game from last month's Torbay congress. The winner is graded only 145, average club level, but he romps to victory by imaginative tactics.

JE Walker-M Abbott, Torbay 1995, Blackmar-Diemer Gambit

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nc3 d5 3 e4 dxe4 4 f3 exf3 5 Nxf3 Bf5 6 Bc4 Lane prefers 6 Ne5. e6 7 0-0 Be7? A big advantage of the B-D Gambit is that natural moves can be inferior. Many would develop the bishop, but Nbd7 is precise to stop White's reply.

8 Ne5! Bxc2 Black hopes for 9 Qxc2? Qxd4+ and Qxe5. 9 Nxf7! The acid test of a new openings book is whether it has the variation you first look up. There it is on page 73, with c6 instead of Be7 for Black, and Lane's comment that 9 Nxf7! is the Dutch IM Welling's move.

Kxf7 If Bxd1 10 Nxd8 Bxd8 11 Rd1 White regains the pawn (Kd1-Re1) and his bishop pair is an endgame asset. 10 Qg4 Qd7 11 d5! With c6 instead of Be7 for Black White would continue Bg5 and Rae1. Ke8 12 Qe2?! 12 Qxe6 is simpler. As played, Black could reply exd5. Bg6? 13 dxe6 Bc5+ 14 Be3 Bxe3+ 15 Qxe3 Qe7 16 Rxf6! Removing Black's best defender is decisive. Qxf6 17 Nd5 Qd8 18 Nc7+ Ke7 20 Qxg7+ Resigns.

No 2400: 1 Bb1. If Kxc3 2 Kb1 Kb3 3 Rc3. If Kb3 2 Rc5 Ka4 3 Bc2.

Quick crossword no. 293

Across

1 East European — refinet (6)
4 Patriarch or sheep (5)
7 Thrifty (8)
8 Scottish playwright (6)
9 Leave out (4)
10 Old story (possibly Spanish!) (8)
12 Means of gambling (7,4)
17 Communication (now obsolete) (8)
19 Perform in the street (4)
20 Stand for cooking vessels (6)
21 (Shake with) short sharp sounds (6)
22 Large crowd (5)
23 Ministers of religion (6)

Down

1 Bottom's part in play (7)
2 Igniter or barge (7)
3 Lawyer (9)
4 Informal trousers (5)
5 Official holding inquest (7)
6 The last thing drawn (6)
11 Short-lived (9)
13 Miner or transporter of coal (7)
14 Referee (7)
15 Show (7)
16 Minimum amount of clothing? (6)
18 Church land (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

HERE IS the Christmas Competition for 1995.

The first four problems ask you to rank three possible calls in order of preference. You are South in each case — assume that you are playing rubber bridge with both sides vulnerable:

Problem 1: Your hand is:
♠3 ♥AK654 ♦QJ8743 ♣5

South West North East
?

Rank in order of preference the calls: 1♥, 1♦, Pass.

Problem 2: Your hand is:
♠J986 ♥KQ4 ♦653 ♣Q97

South West North East
1♥ Pass
?

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2♥, 1NT, 1♠.

Problem 3: Your hand is:
♠AK104 ♥A3 ♦J9 ♣K10965

South West North East
1♥
?

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2♣, 1♠, Double.

Problem 4: Your hand is:
♠A4 ♥K7 ♦AKJ632 ♣A76

South West North East
?

Rank in order of preference the calls: 2NT, 2D, 1D.

Problem 5: It is just before midnight on December 31. The grand slam kitty contains £1,000, but if it is not claimed by the end of the year, it goes to the club proprietor, one E Scrooge. You therefore open 7NT as South, in the hope that you will have some play for it. These are the North-South cards:

North
♠10743
♥A108654
♦104
♣4

South
♠AQ2
♥Q32
♦A32
♣A1032

West leads the king of diamonds and you make your contract which was unbeatable after the opening lead.

What is West's hand? (All the cards should be specified).

Solutions should be sent to Guardian Weekend, Christmas Bridge Competition, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Solutions may also be faxed to Guardian Weekend, clearly marked "Christmas Bridge Competition", on +44 171 239-9935. Solutions should arrive no later than January 26, 1996.

A first prize of £100 and two runners-up prizes of £50 will be awarded to the three best solutions randomly drawn.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas!

Rugby Union International England 27 Western Samoa 9

England run but they cannot glide

Robert Armstrong

THE running game remains a tantalising mirage for England but their rejuvenated side can look forward to the Five Nations Championship with cautious optimism.

A two-try victory over the streetwise Samoans after three successive defeats was not to be scorned on a cold, cheerless day that saw England appear as fully contracted professionals for the first time.

No doubt money was the root cause of the yobbish booing and catcalls at Will Carling's men by large sections of the 75,000 crowd. When you have paid up to £30 for a seat in the expectation of seeing players on £36,000 a season provide passable entertainment you are liable to turn nasty if they fail to deliver.

The slow handclap that preceded Paul Grayson's sixth penalty — and the first he missed — was the clearest evidence that the Barbour-coated Twickenham mob have no sense of fair play. The England fly-half deserved gratitude for an invaluable contribution of 17 points on his debut; had he been playing for his first club, Accrington Stanley, Grayson's goals would have been cheered to the echo.

The crowd's loutish behaviour was abruptly terminated by two excellent England tries midway through the second half that effectively killed off Samoan hopes. Nevertheless England continued to look ill at ease with the basic handling skills and precise movement of the ball needed to capitalise on a ton of possession. The new half-back partnership passed 75 per cent of ball received, which is probably an England record, yet continuity remained elusive.

Still, the outcome accurately reflected the current world rankings of both sides. England, who are fourth (some would argue fifth behind Australia), never looked like losing to the Samoans, whose recent 15-all draw with Scotland places them at No 7.

Clearly England will have to improve when they meet France in Paris on January 20 — but then they usually do at the Parc des Princes.

The most appealing aspect of the England side is its comparative youth. Dawson, at 23, is an inventive scrum-half who will get better with experience; Grayson, 24, showed the professionalism of Rob Andrew as well as making a crucial break that triggered the second try; and Dallaglio, 23, not only scored a try in his first full Test but also showed a prodigious appetite for work.

Like the Samoans the French will ask searching questions of England's old guard, Carling, Guscott and Underwood, who moved the ball as though it were a hot potato at a crowded barbecue. Carling at last displayed signs of leadership, especially after the break, while Underwood made the most of his only scoring chance. Guscott, though, must be living on borrowed time with the replacement De Glanville straining at the leash.

In fact, Samoa's tactics at forward offered a timely dress rehearsal for the Five Nations: offside, killing the ball and collapsing scrums were mainstays of their repertoire. It is too glib to complain that the England pack should impose itself on negative play. The referee Ian Rogers did his duty by awarding 23 penalties and Grayson did the rest.

Capping it . . . Dallaglio dives over for England's first try in his first full international PHOTO: FRANK BARON

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Spin doctor for ailing series

THE THIRD Test between South Africa and England at Durban was abandoned and declared a draw after torrential rain denied England any possibility of batting on Sunday and Monday. The umpires called off proceedings with the visitors on 152 for 5, 73 runs behind South Africa's first innings total of 225.

On Saturday, England added just 29 runs in two brief spells totalling 32 minutes. With only two Tests remaining in the rain-ravaged series, both sides will now be under pressure to break the stalemate.

South Africa have named mystery spinner Paul Adams in their 13-man squad for the last two Tests. Six weeks ago, Adams was virtually unknown outside the Cape Town club he represents in local league cricket. But now his remarkable talent could prove a serious threat to the tourists when the series is decided over the Christmas and New Year period.

If he makes the final XI at Port Elizabeth on Boxing Day, the left-arm wrist spinner, who turns 19 on January 21, will become the youngest Test player in the country's history — and the first product of their development programme to reach cricket's highest level.

Adams, who played for South Africa A at Kimberley, claimed match figures of nine for 181 during England's embarrassing defeat. He bowls with his head down while looking back towards the umpire's feet and has troubled batsmen around the country since he shot to national fame in October. His 32 first-class wickets have cost only 24 runs apiece.

MANAGERS on the move were firmly in the limelight on the British soccer scene last week. Mark McGhee was named as the new boss of Wolverhampton Wanderers after a record compensation deal was worked out with his former club, Leicester City. Wolves, who officially confirmed McGhee as Graham Taylor's replacement, agreed to pay Leicester a sum believed to be around £750,000. At first Leicester refused to accept McGhee's resignation, but lawyers for the two sides finally thrashed out a compensation package.

Also on the move was Howard Kendall, who looked forward to a return to the good times after becoming Sheffield United's manager. "I'm thrilled to be with a great club," the former manager of Notts County said. "Our short-term objective will be to get points, improve our League position and achieve safety."

Martin O'Neill quit as manager of Norwich City but the club refused to accept his resignation. O'Neill took over at the club this season and still has 18 months of his two-year contract to run. However, he was being strongly tipped to take up McGhee's place at Leicester.

On the players' front, Blackburn Rovers won the race to sign Welsh international Chris Coleman from Crystal Palace for £2.8 million. Coventry, West Ham and Wimbledon were other clubs interested in the 25-year-old centre half.

Meanwhile, Wimbledon have accepted a transfer request from Vinnie Jones. The midfielder, 31 next month, left the club six years ago and played for Leeds, Sheffield United and Chelsea before returning to the Dons in 1992. But this time it looks like Vinnie will be going for good.

Wimbledon were also in the frame when Uefa chiefs stripped English clubs of a fourth European place next season, basing their decision on the Dons' and Tottenham's lack of enthusiasm for the Intertoto Cup. An extra Uefa place was awarded to England last season because of its clubs' good behaviour in Europe.

BELGIAN soccer star Jean-Marc Bosman won his five-year legal battle when the European Court of Justice upheld the Bosman ruling which bans transfer fees for out-of-contract players and allows clubs to play unlimited EC foreigners. The ruling has left the football transfer market in turmoil.

THE BBC was left in the pits when ITV snatched the contract to cover Formula One motor racing. The five-year deal, worth £60 million, comes into effect at the start of the 1997 season. The fee was believed to be nearly 10 times higher than that paid by the BBC for its existing three-year contract. The blow to the Beeb's prestige comes only a fortnight after it lost the FA Cup final and it was all the more humiliating because the corporation was not even given a chance to bid.

AMERICAN golfer Fred Couples won the Johnnie Walker World Championship in Jamaica, beating Vijay Singh of Fiji and fellow American Loren Roberts at the second play-off hole to lift the title for the second time. Couples won the inaugural event and in the five-year history of the tournament has collected nearly £1 million from it. The prize money on Sunday was £358,000.



O'Neill: Leicester rumours

DAVE BASSETT resigned as manager of Sheffield United on Monday last week. Just three days earlier his number had come up in the club's Revival Draw. The prize? £2,000 in travel vouchers.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal 1, Chelsea 1; Aston Villa 4, Coventry 1; Blackburn 1, Middlesbrough 0, Liverpool 2, Man Utd 0; Newcastle Utd 1, Everton 0; QPR 2, Bolton 1; Sheff Wed 6, Leeds 2; West Ham 2, Southampton 1; Wimbledon 0, Tottenham 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle Utd (played 18, points 42); 2, Man Utd (18-35); 3, Tottenham (18-33).

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division
Barnsley 1, Charlton 2; Grimsby 1, Southend 1; Huddersfield 4, West Brom 1; Ipswich 1, Sheff Utd 1; Leicester 3 Norwich 2; Millwall 0, Derby 1; Oldham 4, Birmingham 0; Portsmouth 4, Luton 0; Reading 1, Sunderland 1; Stoke 1, Crystal Palace 2; Watford 3; Tranmere 0; Wolverhampton 0, Port Vale 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Sunderland (21-38); 2, Derby (22-37); 3, Leicester (22-36).

Second Division: Blackpool 4, Bradford 1; Bournemouth 3, Stockport 2; Bristol Rovers 2, Oxford Utd 0; Carlisle 1, Walsall 1; Chesterfield 2, Brentford 2; Notts County 0, Crewe 1; Peterborough 1, Rotherham 0; Shrewsbury 2, Brighton 1; Swansea 2, Burnley 4; Swindon 1, Wrexham 1; Wycombe 1, Bristol City 1; York 0, Hull City 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (20-42); 2, Crewe (20-40); 3, Notts County (20-38).

Third Division: Bury 1, Gillingham 0; Chester 1, Preston 1; Colchester 2, Scunthorpe 1; Darlington 1, Barnet 1; Doncaster 4, Leyton Orient 1; Exeter 2, Rochdale 0; Fulham 1, Northampton 3; Hartlepool 1, Cambridge Utd 2; Lincoln 0, Plymouth 0; Mansfield 1, Cardiff 1; Torquay 0, Scarborough 0; Wigan 2, Hereford 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Chester (19-38); 2, Preston (20-37); 3, Gillingham (19-36)

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP: First Round
Albion 0, Deveronvale 2; Glasgow U 0, Spartans 1.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 1, Hearts 2; Celtic 1, Falkirk 0; Hibernian 1, Raith 2; Kilmarnock 2, Partick 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (17-42); 2, Celtic (18-41); 3, Hibernian (18-28).

First Division: Dundee 0, St Johnstone 1; Dunfermline 2, Airdrie 0; Greenock Morton 1, Dundee Utd 2; Hamilton 3, Dumbarton 0; St Mirren 2, Clydebank 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Dunfermline (18-37); 2, Dundee Utd (18-34); 3, Greenock M (18-33).

Second Division: Berwick 2, Montrose 2; Clyde 0, East Fife 1; Forfar 0, Stranraer 0; Queen of South 1, Stirling 5; Stenhousemuir 1, Ayr 1. **Leading positions:** 1, East Fife (17-39); 2, Stirling (17-33); 3, Berwick (17-28).

Third Division: Brechin 2, Livingston 0; Cowdenbeath 0, Caledonian T 0; Queen's Pk 2, Arbroath 0; Ross 2, Alloa 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Livingston (17-34); 2, Brechin 18-32); 3, Ross (17-26)

Boxing

Tyson back in lethal form

Richard Williams

WHEN the bell sounded, Buster Mathis Jr ran across the ring and, like a playful baby elephant, head down and probably eyes closed, crashed straight into Mike Tyson. Then, overcome by his own attempt to swing a left hook, he fell down.

His priority, in honour of his late father, was to avoid humiliation, which meant that he had to fight with whatever weaponry was available to him, however primitive. And for that rather touching display of aggression alone, some observers gave him the first round of last weekend's fight in the Philadelphia Spectrum.

Mathis, 25 years old and a 25-1 shot to beat Tyson, survived the opening three minutes, and the next three too, thanks to a gift for ducking and weaving that had his illustrious opponent's best shots, mostly left hooks, hitting thin air.

The third round was when reality intervened. Tyson immediately announced a change of gear by finding a way through his opponent's tangled defence and slamming Mathis's head back with a long, hard left jab. Two minutes into the round he jolted him with a right uppercut, his trademark punch.

Thirty seconds later Tyson unloaded a second uppercut and Mathis was stunned. A third failed to follow it home but the fourth projected Mathis across the ring with an almost implausible degree of momentum and landed him on his back.

He still had his wits and he pushed himself back up, but to achieve an upright condition on the count of 10 was not good enough for referee Frank Cappuccino, who took the first available opportunity to confirm Mathis's status as the second victim of Tyson's comeback.